

MEDIEVAL EXEGESIS & RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

*Commentary, Conflict, and Community
in the Premodern Mediterranean*

EDITED BY RYAN SZPIECH

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Por la eficiente de nris manos. Por la
formal pre para sobre nos. Por la final
la gracia de adonay nro dios. El psalmi
ta por la excelencia dela final la antiq
sobre la causa del auento z pncipio del auen
to. z digo la nra ayuda es en el nombre
del dios q hizo aelos z tria. Et de aqui
adelante va siguiendo el pceso de como
se cause fazer esta bhoia a dios plaziendo.



Et sobre la causa del auento
z pncipio del auento: z e
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q el vno es no es numer
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q antiqz la final causa a
las otras tres por su nobleza
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MEDIEVAL EXEGESIS AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

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**Bordering
Religions** / *Concepts, Conflicts,
and Conversations*

SERIES EDITORS

Kathryn Kueny, Karen Pechilis, and James T. Robinson

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Premodern Mediterranean

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First edition

for María Rosa Menocal (1953–2012)
and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (1940–2013)
In Memoriam

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Permission for the cover image (from the Arragal Bible, fol. 1v) has been provided by the Palacio de Lira and the Fundación Casa de Alba. Reproduction of the image in Chapter 5 (MS Clm 15956, fol. 94v) was provided by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. I wish to thank both institutions for their helpful cooperation.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND REFERENCES

The essays gathered here refer to many Hebrew and Arabic titles and words. Transliteration of Hebrew has followed the style sheet offered by *AJS Review*, and transliteration of Arabic follows the system of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (*IJMES*). Non-English phrases and words have been italicized within the text, and longer citations in Hebrew, Arabic, and Latin, when present, have been included in the notes. In the interest of economy, original texts have been referenced but generally not cited in the original, except in a few important cases. However, all foreign titles are listed as published. Arabic and Hebrew titles in the notes are given in transliterated form only, and in the general bibliography, these transliterated titles are followed by an approximate English translation or appropriate description in brackets. Primary sources in the bibliography are usually listed by first name rather than family name (e.g. “Judah Halevi” rather than “Halevi, Judah”) except when names are most commonly known in another form (e.g. “Ibn Ṭufayl, Abū Bakr”).

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MEDIEVAL EXEGESIS AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE

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Introduction

Ryan Szpiech

In the third chapter of his anti-Muslim treatise *Contra legem sarracenorum* (*Against the Law of the Saracens*), written around 1300 after his return to Italy from Baghdad, Dominican Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320) discusses the Muslim claim that Jews and Christians received a true revelation from God through Moses and Jesus, but then subsequently corrupted it. In order to argue against this accusation, Riccoldo turns to the Qurʾān itself:

It says in the [Qurʾānic] chapter about Johah [Q. 10:94], “If you are in doubt concerning what we have revealed to you, ask those who have read the Book before you.” However, those who read the Book before the Saracens were the Christians and Jews, who received the Pentateuch and the Gospel, as Muḥammad himself sets out. Muḥammad, therefore, tells the Saracens to make enquiries from Christians and Jews concerning ambiguous matters. However, how is it that Muḥammad sent these people back to false testimonies, if he really was a genuine prophet, as they say?¹

With these words, Riccoldo raises one of the central issues facing medieval Muslim, Christian, and Jewish writers alike in their confrontations with other religions—namely, how to evaluate the religious and legal status of foreign scriptures without undermining the validity or uniqueness of one’s own. Riccoldo is here attempting to affirm the integrity of the Bible against Muslim accusations of its corruption, and he is doing so by interpreting a passage that Muslims would consider valid and immutable as divine revelation. At the same time, however, this appeal forms part of Riccoldo’s *attack* on Islam, including an attack on the legitimacy of the Qurʾān itself. In such exegetical maneuverings, Riccoldo was caught

between affirming and denying the scriptures of the different religious traditions about which he wrote.

This double gesture was not unique to Riccoldo, nor was it uncommon among his contemporary exegetes, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. In the Middle Ages, scriptural commentary constituted an essential aspect of the expression of belief in all three faiths, representing a multifaceted practice—at once social, devotional, intellectual, creative, and educational. At the same time, because it dealt with issues such as the nature of the canon, the limits of acceptable interpretation, and the meaning of salvation history from the perspective of faith, such commentary arose in the Middle Ages along the fault lines of interconfessional conflict and polemical disputation between religious communities. The establishment of a canon meant the deprecation of any rival one, and any interpretation or gloss that was accepted as authoritative also constituted an implicit rejection of the unorthodox and unknown. To read and interpret scriptures held to be authoritative only among one's neighbors required a careful and often subtle evaluation of the boundaries between the familiar and the foreign. Within the multiconfessional world of the medieval Mediterranean, exegesis was always a double-valenced phenomenon that pressed against the boundaries between selfhood and otherness, community and outsider.

The thirteen essays in this volume explore the double nature of scriptural commentary in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, considering exegesis in all three religions as both a praxis of communal faith and a tool for demarcating the boundaries between religious communities and their rivals and neighbors. Adopting a broad view of medieval exegesis as a discourse, or cluster of discourses, of cross-cultural and interreligious conflict, the essays included here focus particularly on the exegetical genre in the western and southern Mediterranean during the High and especially the Late Middle Ages (roughly from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries).

These thought-provoking studies are based on a selection from papers read at the conference, "Medieval Exegesis: An Interfaith Discourse," organized by this author in October 2011 at the University of Michigan. Bringing together scholars of Islamic, Christian, and Jewish exegesis from Spain, Austria, Italy, Israel, and across North America, this conference provided an intimate and productive setting to explore in depth the interplay of scriptural commentary, interreligious conflict, and translation.² The variety of perspectives and topics represented by the conference

participants—whose work is most often discussed in specialized contexts focusing on only one exegetical tradition or one core text—opened the door to unexpected and exciting discussions about the commonalities and differences in medieval exegetical practices among readers from different religions. It also underscored the importance of cross-cultural and interreligious comparison in the study of religious discourse in the medieval Mediterranean. While each of the essays included here incorporates new research in its area of specialty, together they also convey an exciting sense of the possibilities of new discoveries and insights that only a comparative dialogue can bring.

The comparative perspective of the conference and the essays embodies the best intentions of the conference's primary sponsor, the European Research Council, which provided funding through an ERC Starting Grant. This grant supported a four-year research project (2008–12) led by Principal Investigator Esperanza Alfonso (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), one of the contributors to this volume. The project, entitled “Inteleg: The Intellectual and Material Legacies of Late Medieval Sephardic Judaism. An Interdisciplinary Approach,” provided support for four public seminars and four academic conferences, all focusing on the Bible and its place in the intellectual, religious, artistic, and polemical activity in the western Mediterranean during the Late Middle Ages.³ While the principle focus of the Inteleg project dealt with Jewish cultural production, the conferences and research projects of the individual team members aimed to situate the study of the Bible within Sephardic culture in a wider cultural and religious setting. The multi-confessional perspective of this group of essays is a tangible outcome of the broad, eclectic impetus at the heart of the Inteleg project.

The comparative approach of this collection is partly modeled on a number of recent publications treating together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim exegesis, the most notable among which is *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Oxford, 2003).⁴ Yet unlike that and similar comparative studies, *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference* does not set out to provide an exhaustive side-by-side description of scriptural commentary in the three religions. Instead, it limits itself to a more modest scope, focusing on the *use* of exegesis by writers in each tradition to mark out and clarify the boundaries of communal identity. Put differently, it does not survey the overall characteristics of scriptural commentary in each religion or try to compare exegetical trends in general, but instead examines the

function of exegesis as a vehicle for both theological apology and social polemic.⁵ Rather than offer an exhaustive and systematic presentation of the similarities and differences among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions, *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference* poses specific questions about the interplay of these commentaries and the resulting intellectual disputation or religious conflict. In taking this thematic approach to exegesis, all the essays contained herein address, each in its own way, some of the same preliminary questions posed at the beginning of the Medieval Exegesis conference: Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, who was reading exegesis from other faith traditions and in what contexts? How did individual exegetes negotiate their interest in alien scriptures and commentaries with their commitment to the communities to which they themselves belonged? How did the technical demands of reading and translating foreign languages affect the views and practices of these exegetes? How did writers employ an exegetical approach outside of the genre of scriptural interpretation, such as in philosophy, public disputation, or polemical treatises? In exploring these and related questions, the contributors analyze the connections among commentary, disputation, dialogue, and scholarship within and across Jewish, Christian, and Muslim cultural spheres in the Mediterranean.

Two other questions are critically important in explaining the structure and shape of this volume, and these are practical starting points from which to survey the individual chapters. First, on what basis can Jewish, Christian, and Muslim exegesis be meaningfully compared? This seemingly simple question is raised in the opening essay by Sarah Stroumsa, who considers the problematic origins of the category of the “Abrahamic” religions. Although ubiquitous in modern thinking and parlance, both popular and academic, the term “Abrahamic religions” did not emerge until only very recently. Even more problematically, the common heritage in the figure Abraham that is presumed by this terminology was almost never recognized as such among writers in any of the three religions before the twentieth century. It is, moreover, one that reflects a particularly Muslim view of prophetic history, in which Abraham is the founder of a tradition that includes Judaism and Christianity but that is completed and corrected only by the advent of Islam. Needless to say, such a view is not acceptable within a Jewish or Christian worldview, in which Islam is not the heir of the Abrahamic tradition but a late and theologically confused or unnecessary repetition. Far from being a theme of ecumenical inclusiveness, the term “Abrahamic” is an exclusive and conflictive one

that tacitly underscores the theological divisions among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Yet how can we refer to these three as a group, if not as “Abrahamic” religions? On what basis do they form a coherent category? Other proposed terms involve even more significant problems. The popular denomination of “the three cultures” (*las tres culturas*), common in discussions of medieval Iberia, is no less distorting in its implications because it flattens different historical periods (when two of the three religions experienced significant contact in different configurations) into a single artificial moment of three-way interaction that in reality rarely or never existed. As Sarah Stroumsa explains, “unlike the Muslim orient, where at times Muslims, Jews, and Christians were indeed active members of one intellectual community, in the Iberian Peninsula the three communities hardly ever formed a contemporaneous intellectual triangle.” For this reason, the expression *las tres culturas* might be likened to notions such as “Judeo-Christian tradition” or even the “Middle Ages” itself, expressions that represent a vast and imprecise grab-bag of ideas that persist for the sake of convention or convenience but that rely on extrahistorical foundations and ultimately reinforce the interpretive biases of their Christian and postmedieval origins.

Another common alternative to “Abrahamic” is the term “religions of the Book,” an expression adapted as a calque of the Islamic phrase *ahl al-kitāb* (People of the Book). This latter expression is used in the Qurʾān (e.g., Q. 22:17, 98:1–2) to denote those who have received a true revelation from God, often in opposition to those guilty of polytheism (*al-shirk*). Although less obviously distorting, this option is no less problematic for various reasons. First, although the usage of this term in the Qurʾān and later Muslim tradition implies a certain connection among Jews, Christians, and Muslims as part of a single tradition of revelation and prophecy, such a view, like the notion of the Abrahamic, reflects a particularly Muslim, supersessionist perspective, and was never commonly shared by medieval Jews or Christians, for whom Islam was an illegitimate imitation and not a final fulfillment. Moreover, neither the Qurʾān nor its later exegetes used the term “People of the Book” to refer to Muslims, who are instead referred to not only as the recipients of revealed truth but also a “community of believers” (*muʾminūn*) who have “submitted” to God (*muslimūn*).⁶ Indeed, even though the Qurʾān, as Riccoldo da Monte di Croce points out, urges Muslims to “ask those who have read the Book before you,” it also says explicitly (Q. 6:7) that the Qurʾān itself is *not* a *kitāb*, a book or “scripture on a page” (*kitāban fī qirṭāsīn*), but is instead

the oral recitation of an eternal and unchanging truth.⁷ Finally, although it is often used as a positive designation for Jews and Christians in the Qurʾān (and sometimes for Zoroastrians and those called Sabians as well), it is not unambiguously positive, sometimes being used to denote with frustration those who resist believing in the truth of Islam.⁸ For these reasons, the modern usage of “religions of the Book” as an expression to refer to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam together is at best imprecise and at worst distorted and misleading.

This lack of acceptable terminology intimates a problem in the underlying concept itself. Lacking a convenient or accurate denomination for the three religions considered as a group, on what basis can Jewish, Christian, and Muslim exegetical traditions be viewed together through a single interpretive lens? Can we speak about each tradition as a separate thing—that is, as possessing a definite worldview different from that of its contemporaries? Setting aside the serious question of how we can even speak about any of the religions as a coherent entity with definite and essential characteristics—a problem I will turn to again below—we might venture an answer as to how such groups might be compared by considering the intention behind usage of the expression “religions of the Book,” which, despite its imprecision, seeks to identify a common heritage based on a foundation of monotheism, partly interwoven historical frameworks, and overlapping prophetic revelations preserved by each in the form of a sacred *scripture*. This apparent commonality, however, rather than simplifying the difficulty, instead points to a second basic question underlying the structure of this volume: Despite their somewhat homologous prophetic histories, how comparable are the notions of scripture and commentary in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?

This question, like that of the basis of comparison among the three religions, is likewise thornier than it might at first seem. As William A. Graham has shown, a precise and single definition of “scripture” is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish, and even the simplest definitions can easily impose a conceptual framework inherited from a modern, Christian notion of “holy scripture.” With this caveat in mind, we can, following Graham, tentatively define scripture here as a written text defined as holy by its community. “A text only becomes a ‘scripture’ when a group of persons value it as sacred, powerful and meaningful, possessed of an exalted authority, and in some fashion transcendent of, and hence distinct from other speech and writing.”⁹ Although a single, homogeneous idea of sacred text is not shared among the three predominant religions

of the medieval Mediterranean—indeed, such an idea is exceedingly difficult to establish even within the individual religious traditions themselves, which cannot be taken as monolithic or uniform in any sense—we might argue that there did exist (and still does) a belief among the communities of the three faiths that their individual scriptural corpora—the Hebrew Tanakh, the Christian Bible (comprising the recollated Hebrew Bible and the New Testament), and the Qurʾān—reflected and recorded an ultimate truth not found in any other texts. As Jane Dammen McAuliffe explains, “these three religions profess a mutual belief in divine-human communication as expressed and encoded in written form. Each of these three canonized a core set of documents as the repository of this revelation. Each, in other words, reveres a ‘scripture’ as a central component of its self-understanding.”¹⁰

For this reason, all three religions similarly can be said to have developed comparable—although still very different—traditions of interpretation and commentary in which those exclusive textual representations of truth were interpreted and expounded according to their own understanding and faith. Even more, all three faiths might be likened in their particular approach to sacred texts, and comparisons can be drawn between Jewish and Christian ideas of the four levels of scriptural meaning (*peshaṭ*, ‘literal’ or ‘historical’; *remez*, ‘allegorical’ or ‘philosophical’; *derash*, ‘homiletical’ or ‘rabbinic’; and *sod*, ‘mystical’ or ‘esoteric’ in Judaism; or ‘literal-historical’, ‘allegorical-figurative’, ‘tropological-moral’, ‘anagogical-eschatological’ in Christianity) or between these notions and the Islamic terms for the levels of meaning in the Qurʾān (such as al-Tustarī’s four levels *zāhir*, ‘literal’; *bāṭin*, ‘symbolic’; *ḥadd*, ‘prescriptive’; and *maṭlaʿ*, ‘anagogical’; or the more common distinctions between only two broad levels of meaning or interpretation such as *tafsīr*, ‘exoteric’ and *taʾwīl*, ‘esoteric’; *zāhir*, ‘outer’ and *bāṭin*, ‘inner’; or *muḥkam*, ‘clear’ and *mutashābih*, ‘ambiguous’).¹¹ Other equally logical comparisons are also possible and all of them underscore the significant similarities among practices of scriptural commentary among medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims. One might, for example, note the common attitude of mutual exclusivity held by each with regard to its own sacred text—that only its own textual witness represents the truest and most faithful account of God’s revelation to humans, and that the exegesis of its own sacred text is by definition more authoritative than the interpretations of alien texts.

Such a foundation for comparing Jewish, Christian, and Muslim exegesis, while methodologically suggestive and didactically useful, remains

rather tenuous. Although such common claims about prophetic tradition or a scripturally based, shared monotheism might prove sufficient to stimulate interfaith dialogue or ecumenical good will, these generalizations are not adequate as a basis for deeper historical analysis. As Aaron Hughes has recently pointed out, not only do “definitions of ‘Abrahamic religions’ tend to rely on a series of qualifiers that amount to little more than a string of vague caricatures,” but the category that the term is meant to describe “is predicated on essences” that are “theologically and not historically imagined.”¹² It would be too easy to assume without question that Jewish, Christian, and Muslim exegesis bear obvious comparison because they are bound together in what seem like analogous traditions and beliefs.

In this book we attempt to avoid the pitfalls of such unexamined factitious categories and plausible but probably unsubstantiated connections. Rather than focusing on superficial similarities or appealing to a notion of a shared theological foundation or even to a shared understanding of the revelation of prophecy or the nature of scripture, the comparison of exegetical sources in the three religions is based here on the historical facts of proximate and sometimes overlapping social and cultural milieus and a common *practice* of confronting the beliefs of other religions with exegetical writing. The opening example cited from Riccoldo da Monte di Croce’s attack on the Qur’ān is a concrete example of such confrontation in practice. Other similar examples show that thinkers from all three religions wrote about their own holy writ, as well as about the books of other religions to which they did not accord the status of scripture, in order to compare and contrast their beliefs with those of their neighbors and rivals. In short, these essays are not collected on the basis of a shared theological or transhistorical foundation or an idea of the uniform nature of scripture or medieval exegesis among different religious communities. Rather, the comparison of these texts by Jews, Christians, and Muslims is justified here by the simple fact that their authors all read and wrote about each other’s sources and ideas.

This comparative approach aims to avoid another analytical pitfall as well, that of considering medieval polemical texts according to overly rigid postmedieval categories that ignore the genres and forms of medieval writing itself. This issue is especially pressing in the study of interconfessional discourse because “polemic” (*polemicus*, *polemica*) was not a term in common use in the Middle Ages but only appears with frequency in the late sixteenth century, when it became a named genre of writing

(later to be contrasted to the less common genre of irenics, which does not appear until a few centuries later).¹³ In the early modern period, “polemics” (<Fr. *polémique* <Gr. *polemikos*, ‘warlike’) came to denote a particular literary form of religious and philosophical writing structured as an intellectual or religious debate between competing ideas. While “debate” and “disputational” literature is of course older than Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism, such writing developed within both religions from very early on and took a variety of forms in the Middle Ages. While we might accurately speak of a medieval work as expressing a polemical tone or intention—medieval writers did craft defenses (*apologiae*) of faith directed *against* rival groups or ideas, and argumentation *Contra Iudaeos* was abundant and constant—the genre of “polemics” itself did not exist as such in the Middle Ages, and one might well affirm that “medieval polemic” is a largely artificial category based on postmedieval divisions. For this reason, it is critical to approach this writing through the medieval forms in which it appeared—the *disputatio*, the *refutatio*, the *dialogus*, as well as other genres of writing such as the philosophical and religious *tractatus* and, above all, the exegetical commentary. By studying interreligious discourse through its uniquely medieval forms, paying particular attention to exegesis, gloss, treatise, and commentary, this collection avoids imposing modern categories of study onto medieval ideas.¹⁴

At the same time, these studies do not limit themselves only to discussions of glosses on scripture, but also look at commentaries on and interpretations of a wide variety of texts including extrascriptural works of religious authority (such as the Mishnah, Talmud, midrash, ḥadīth, Sīra—biographies and traditions about Muḥammad—and Patristic commentary), philosophical and mystical tracts, and disputational treatises. We are here presented with Jews reading both Muslim texts (Sarah Stroumsa on Maimonides’s ideas of the Sabians) and Christian sources (Ángel Sáenz-Badillos on the Castilian Bible of Moses Arragel, Nina Caputo on Nahmanides’s response to Christian readings of Genesis), as well as Jews engaging in interreligious arguments (Alexandra Cuffel on polemical biographies of Jesus modeled on Arabic stories). We learn of Christians critically engaging with the Talmud and Jewish exegeses of the Bible (Ursula Ragacs on Ramon Martí, Harvey J. Hames on the Dominican disputations of the thirteenth century) and of Christians reading the Qurʾān and ḥadīth (Thomas E. Burman on Martí and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce), and even sometimes through the fictional guise of an imaginary Jew (Antoni Biosca i Bas on the epistles forged by Alfonso Buenhombre).

We also find Christians responding to Jewish interpretations of Islam (Sidney Griffith on Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's glosses to Ibn Kammūnah) or discussing other Jewish sources from the perspective of conversion (Yosi Yisraeli on Pablo de Santa María, Steven F. Kruger on Guillaume de Bourges). We likewise see Muslims absorbing ideas from Jewish texts (Sarah Stroumsa on Ibn Masarra's possible knowledge of the *Sefer Yezira*, or *The Book of Creation*), as well as (on rare occasions) reading and even admiring the Bible (Walid Saleh on al-Biqāʿī).

In looking together at these many different authors and texts, we can see that the two key questions posed above—Can Jews, Christians, and Muslims be considered as parts of a coherent category of investigation? And can each religion's notions of scripture and exegesis be legitimately compared?—may be answered in the affirmative on the basis of the research presented in these wide-ranging individual essays. These provide ample evidence that writers from each of the three religions were reading and engaging with, most often but not always in a contentious vein, authors and texts from the other two. They were doing so, moreover, not from the detached vantage point of analytical observation valued in modern social scientific research and sometimes laid claim to (however dubiously) in the historiography about the Middle Ages. Rather, writers from different backgrounds read each other's texts and commentaries through their own interpretive lenses and in terms of their own sacred histories. In this way, the subject of these essays might be said to be how *exegesis*, commentary on sacred text, was regularly a form of *eisegesis*, a manner of reading that inserts one's own assumptions and bias into the process of interpretation. Medieval polemical writers practiced exegesis *eisegetically* by "reading into" the text their own theological and historical assumptions. Certainly, one might rightly insist that all interpretive reading is in fact *isogetic*, insofar as all reading is conditioned by the reader's worldview and prejudices, or as Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests: "all understanding is interpretation" and "interpretation always involves a relation to the question that is asked of the interpreter."¹⁵ Medieval disputational writing was undoubtedly more explicit and unapologetic about its own agenda and more strident in imposing its own interpretive frame in the act of reading than the process Gadamer has in mind, yet it was, nevertheless, like all textual interpretation, *contextualized*, was always a situated social act, and as such was also an act made and understood in light of the shared assumptions of a community.

The meaning of this assertion must be further explained, given that the subjects of these essays extend far beyond any single area or group. The sources considered here in fact cover a wide geographical range, involving authors working in the Iberian Peninsula (Ibn Masarra in Cordoba; Pablo de Santa María and Moses Arragel in Castile; Ramon Martí and Nahmanides in Aragon), western North Africa (Alfonso Buenhombré in Marrakech), southern France (Jacob ben Reuben in Gascony, Gersonides in Languedoc), northern France (Nicholas Donin and Nicholas of Lyra in Paris, Rashi in Troyes, Joseph ben Nathan Official in Sens), the Upper Rhine region (Reuchlin in Baden), the Italian peninsula (Jacob Anatoli and Isaac ben Moses Arama in Naples, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce in Florence), eastern Turkey (Ibn al-Maḥrūmah in Mardin), and eastern North Africa (Maimonides and al-Biqā'ī in Cairo, as well as the anonymous documents in the Cairo Genizah). Although a few of these essays involve material from Northern Europe, a majority concentrate on texts and authors clustering around and crisscrossing the Mediterranean Sea, from Iberia to Egypt, Turkey to Morocco, Naples to Provence. As such, we have subsumed all of the essays gathered here under the broad banner of the “premodern Mediterranean” while at the same time recognizing that a number of studies necessarily escape this loose, informal description.

Among the various authors and texts treated here, what is more unifying than geography is the congruence of their apologetic and exegetical foci, the defense of the boundaries and integrity of their communities through the interpretation of their authoritative texts. In this, all of them offer examples of textual commentaries that express, both implicitly and explicitly, the understanding of their authors and readers that they are members of distinct communities of faith. At the same time, these essays also highlight the inherent conflicts generated by the defense of those communities' boundaries and integrity precisely as a result of this interpretation. Taking account of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's warning that “‘community’ is a bad word for medievalists, especially, to be careless with” because “it too readily assimilates to the construction of the Middle Ages as the period of an organic and static society chiefly important as the passive and narrativeless Other against which post-medieval history can be written,” I propose the term here not as a general historiographical shorthand for a “social group,” but in a more restricted way as a name for a group whose members understood themselves to be united

by a common holy text.¹⁶ Each exegetical tradition explored here might be taken to represent a “textual community” akin to the sort proposed by Brian Stock: a group unified not by social or geographical origins or by cultural norms, but by “a parallel use of texts, both to structure the internal behavior of the groups’ members and to provide solidarity against the outside world.”¹⁷ While this seems to be a fitting description of the task of polemical writing, my intended sense is different from that of Stock, who uses the term to denote groups bound by the direct, often oral, sharing of a common text. I invoke it here to mean a group bound by a common, although not usually collaborative, practice of textual interpretation and a shared set of assumptions about the nature of those texts. What characterizes the similarities and differences among the writers examined here is their acceptance or rejection of certain writings as sacred and authoritative and their beliefs about the role of those writings in the unfolding of a common salvation history.

Taken even more broadly, this acceptance or rejection is itself a factor that links these authors in a coherent way despite their wide temporal and geographical separation and religious differences. Put differently, while the authors from each religious tradition can be said to make up separate “textual communities” that are defined by their shared acceptance of text and shared interpretive norms, we might also venture—*pace* Stroumsa’s introductory remarks—to look at *all* of the authors and texts, irrespective of their religious differences and distance across time and space, as part of one larger “textual network” linked through a shared polemical discourse expressed in a variety of genres and forms. Though it would seem that this could not legitimately be called a “community” in any sense (for surely such a group would not have been experienced or recognized as a community by its members), it would, nevertheless, be marked by a shared participation in a common textual practice, that of using commentary on authoritative texts to define orthodox belief and to delineate the boundaries of identity, often in response or opposition to other, rival commentaries. It is ironic that expressions such as “People of the Book,” “Abrahamic religions,” and “the three cultures,” which were coined and are deployed in a modern spirit of multicultural ecumenism, may actually serve better, with the proper caveats, to describe medieval writing about rival traditions of revelation, sacred text, and salvation. Polemical exegesis was, in fact, probably one realm in which “the three religions” actually were brought together in a mutually recognizable, theologically based, triangular relationship, albeit an imaginary and ex-

trahistorical one. Thus even though Christians in tenth- and eleventh-century al-Andalus were a social minority of relatively little consequence (in comparison with Jews) just as Muslims were in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Christian kingdoms in Iberia, each of the three religions played a persistent role in the tangled sacred histories and apologetic discourse of the others at both periods, while Abraham stood at the heart of the theological competition between imagined sacred histories rather than serving as a symbol of their unity.

The history of a “polemical community,” such as any of these are, need not, in any case, be limited to actual demographics or real social or intellectual interaction, and can just as well be the history of “imaginary” constructs of belief and ideology. As Benedict Anderson has famously suggested in reference to the history of modern nationalism, “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”¹⁸ Thus while it is true that terms such as “Jewish,” “Christian,” and “Muslim” all represent essentializing and reductive generalizations that overly simplify the diversity of each community of believers—just as “polemic” might be said to essentialize the variety of medieval forms into an artificial whole—the usage of such terms here is justified as a way of making more patent the intersection of categories and discourses used within disputational writing itself. In analyzing polemically motivated exegesis, Stock’s “textual communities” might be fruitfully refracted through the lens of Anderson’s imaginary ones, and provide a conceptual space in which writers in “the three religions” did see themselves as interacting, albeit from an exclusive rather than inclusive perspective.

Whether we choose to see all those engaged in disputational writing as forming part of a multifaceted community of dialogic textual practice, or we more strictly limit the notion of community to refer to each separate faith group and its network of exegetes and their readers, the idea of a textual community can nevertheless borrow some insight from the abundant work on medieval communities in the realm of social history. The textual community of medieval exegetes and polemically motivated writers might appropriately be linked with the kind of community studied by Susan Reynolds, “which defines itself by engaging in collective activities—activities which are characteristically determined and controlled less by formal regulations than by shared values and norms.”¹⁹ In the cases examined here, the values and norms are those defining authoritative texts and their acceptable and orthodox interpretation. The

resulting “polemical community,” although it is textually based rather than physical or social, is nevertheless similar to that described by Miri Ruben in her accounts of host-desecration accusations in the later Middle Ages, in which anti-Jewish hostility could “produce a sense of ‘community’ through action, and then memory of past action,” or like that described in detail by David Nirenberg, in which the provocation of anti-Jewish hostility through dramatic reenactment of the Passion “assigned the Jews a fundamental place in the Christian community.”²⁰ Although it was part of an evolving discourse of theological meaning, medieval exegesis was also a form of social practice that carried with it real consequences in the world of interreligious encounters.

By comparing the complex configurations of readers and texts studied in these essays according to the model of a “textual community,” we can thus reach a number of conclusions—that in the later Middle Ages, Jews, Christians, and Muslims did engage with each other’s books and arguments, drawing from one another’s traditions and expertise almost as often as they engaged in controversy and disputation; that exegesis, as a common practice, became the main medium by which writers of each group came in contact with each other’s ideas and debated scripture, prophecy, sacred history, and truth; and that scriptural commentary itself provided a common and recurrent means by which these writers defined and defended their similarities and differences, and thus functioned as the foundation for a communal sense of textual understanding.

At the same time, it should be obvious that these essays also all address the implicit questions so persistent in modern attempts to compare Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions: Can medieval examples of interreligious contact and conflict provide a model or inspiration for modern efforts at interfaith dialogue, multicultural community building, and cross-confessional relations? Put in terms of this volume’s focus: Was the discourse of medieval exegetes always a polemical discourse, or was there also a countertradition of “irenical” exegesis? Despite the wide differences among the particular texts and subject matter treated in these essays, one commonality is the deeply agonistic and frequently divisive nature of medieval scriptural commentary. Taken together, the essays demonstrate repeatedly that among the religions of the medieval Mediterranean, exegesis functioned as a foundation for collaboration, cooperation, or mutual understanding between rival groups only in the rarest of circumstances. As Walid Saleh points out in his essay, knowledge of the other did not often lead to acceptance, and familiarity did not automatically encourage tol-

erance. It would represent a misreading based on an ahistorical and theologically biased presentism to search through these examples for the use of exegesis as a forum for “ecumenism” or interfaith collaboration. The discourse of exegesis, when commenting on unacceptable religious beliefs or scriptures, most often employed an exclusive language of apology and polemic.

Nevertheless, the essays here also make clear that scriptural commentary in these different traditions was not simply a broken record of argumentative formulas expressing a fixed and limited set of ideas. They show us that exegesis, especially when combined with disputational writing, often raises cultural, philosophical, and linguistic issues that are of vital concern to literary critics and historians of ideas. This does not come as a surprise: As exegesis was, whatever its context, a venture in symbols and words, it was never immune to the critical questions of literary and even poetic significance that inhere in all manifestations of language. One such issue central to attacks on the authority of foreign religious books is the evaluation of authenticity and originality, of authorship and authority. The belief in the validity and authority of scripture is inseparable from belief in its authenticity as a singular, revealed truth. To interpret scripture is to treat it as an authoritative source of truth, or rather, as *the* authoritative source par excellence. In Christian culture (and in comparable evaluations of authority found in Jewish and Muslim commentaries), medieval texts were recognized as authoritative on the basis of their *aucltoritas*, their derivation from a known *aucltor*, or true source. As Alastair Minnis has shown, an *aucltor* was by definition an authentic, verifiable, and venerable source, and the text with the oldest and greatest authority, the Bible, was considered the word of the ultimate *aucltor*, God.²¹ Thus, it does not come as a surprise that medieval commentaries on the Bible were one of the places that writers began to challenge traditional notions of textual authority and to expand the definition of authorship itself.²²

Because to recognize authority was also to recognize authenticity, charges of scriptural forgery or inauthenticity—of “false authorship”—were common in medieval disputational writing. As we considered in the opening example from Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, Islamic refutations regularly charged Christianity and Judaism with “falsification” of God’s true revelation. This charge, known as *tahrīf* in Islamic sources, hinged on a distinction between authentic and inauthentic scriptures. As Thomas Burman shows in his essay, Riccoldo turned the tables on these accusers by attacking Muḥammad’s legitimacy as a prophet at the same time as

he offered some close readings of the Qurʾān itself in order to counter Muslim claims of Christian and Jewish *tahrif*. When foreign sources could be exploited as useful proof texts, such as the use of the Qurʾān to support belief in Jesus and Mary (e.g., Q. 3:45) or readings of Jesus’s mention of a “paraclete” or “advocate” in the New Testament (e.g., John 14:16) as proof of the truth of Muḥammad’s prophecy, authors would commonly introduce them by pointing to their alleged authenticity among rival groups.²³ Riccoldo’s contemporary, the Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí, also considered by Burman, repeatedly attacked both Muslim and Jewish beliefs by referring to those books considered “authentic among them.”²⁴ Similarly, in the disputation that took place in Barcelona in 1263 between Catalan Rabbi Moses ben Naḥman (Nahmanides) and the converted Dominican Fra Pau Cristià (Friar Paul Christian), the two sides argued about the authoritative status of halakhic (legal) and aggadic (homiletic-narrative) rabbinic sources. According to the Christian account of the events, Nahmanides “said publicly that he did not believe in the authorities that were cited against him, though they were in ancient, authoritative books of the Jews.”²⁵

Part of the medieval argument over authority and authenticity naturally involved reflection on the nature of translation. One of the Qurʾān’s claims to be true prophecy was based on its own miraculous nature. Muslim belief in the *iʿjāz*, ‘inimitability’, of the Qurʾān, formulated as literary doctrine by the tenth century, was likewise a belief that its authenticity was both deeply tied to the Arabic language and was at the same time extralinguistic, and that its true nature was ultimately untranslatable.²⁶ At the same time, thirteenth-century writers such as Riccoldo and Martí, deeply concerned with the authority of their arguments, likewise took great care in considering the accuracy of their translations of the scriptural texts they cited. Riccoldo made extensive use of Mark of Toledo’s rather literal Latin Qurʾān translation, preferring it to Robert of Ketton’s more poetic rendering. Ramon Martí, similarly, took great care in his *Pugio fidei* (*Dagger of Faith*) to provide original texts of Talmud, midrash, Qurʾān and ḥadīth in original languages alongside his punctilious Latin translations, often interspersed with his attempts at devising a transliteration of Hebrew and Arabic phrases.²⁷ In the same way, participants in the Disputation of Barcelona, which Martí may have attended, debated the proper translation of individual words from the Hebrew Bible (such as *almah*, ‘maiden’ in Isaiah 7:14 or *yom*, ‘day’ in Daniel 12:11). In the fifteenth century, as Saénz-Badillos shows us, Moses Arragel based his Cas-

tilian translation of the Bible directly on the Hebrew original, making ample use of Hebrew syntax and idiom in his translation choices and of Jewish exegetical commentaries in his explanatory notes. As Kruger and Yisraeli show, the question of “versions” and authentic translations is directly tied to that of conversion. The Jewish convert Pablo de Santa María (Solomon Halevi) not only cited extensively from Jewish exegetical and philosophical sources in his *Additiones* (*Additions*) to Nicholas of Lyra’s biblical commentary (which itself made ample use of Jewish exegetes such as Rashi)—often deprecating Lyra’s knowledge of Hebrew and his consequent inability to translate it accurately into Latin—he also prefaced his acerbic commentary with a poetic narrative of his own conversion.

Apart from ideas about language and theoretical issues related to authenticity, translation, and conversion, a final common theme explored in this volume is that of the intersection of gender and exegesis. This topic might well seem out of place at first, for it has been one largely excluded from studies of medieval exegesis and even more overlooked in analysis of interreligious debate. However, as the essays in the final part of this collection all demonstrate, the representation of gender was not an extraneous or unrelated issue appended to the study of more central issues, but was instead a central part of the metaphoric structures and vocabulary used by exegetes in affirming their different theological perspectives. As Lisa Lampert has shown in her recent consideration of “an exegetical tradition that links the spiritual, masculine, and Christian and defines them in opposition to the carnal, feminine, and Jewish,” the representation of sexual difference served throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period as a powerful metaphor for the construction of religious difference.²⁸ Kruger takes up a specific case of such gendered metaphors in the writing of the convert Guillaume de Bourges, and Caputo and Alfonso further show in detail that such deployment of gendered language and imagery was not limited to Christian exegesis or interreligious discourse. The essays in the final part—positioned there as a kind of comprehensive review of all the essays in the first three parts—point back in some way to earlier themes (Cuffel on Jewish readers in Islamic lands, Caputo on Jewish–Christian debate, Alfonso on intra-Jewish exegesis, Kruger on conversion). At the same time, there are many arguments in the first three parts that point ahead to the explicit discussion of gender in the final part. For example, Stroumsa’s exploration of the image of Abraham being chosen, while still in his mother’s womb, to be the “father” of all nations, or Burman’s evidence of Riccoldo reading

the Qur'ānic expression (Q. 4:1) "Lord who created you from a single soul" (*min nafsin waḥidatin*) as "God who created you from one man" (*ex uno homine*), further underscore the centrality of gender in the exegetical vocabulary of both Islamic writers and Christian writers on Islam as well. As Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells have argued elsewhere, "exclusion and inclusion, violence and harmony, patriarchy and gender partnership are intertwined processes most fruitfully considered in conjunction with one another . . . one cannot understand medieval processes of negotiating community without understanding concurrent processes of negotiating difference."²⁹

The analyses presented here show us that exegetical and disputational texts were rhetorically complex, thematically rich, and intellectually provocative, much more so than they are often recognized to be. More significantly, these essays show us the importance of exegesis as a common intellectual and spiritual practice among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Whether they approach exegesis from the perspective of religious questions, such as the theological rivalries among medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims, or from a historical perspective, such as that of the work of medieval Dominicans in confronting non-Christians, or from a thematic perspective, such as that of the use of gender as a marker of identity and exclusion in medieval commentaries, the essays collected in this volume all attest to the profound importance of exegesis as a discourse on identity and a tool of thought in the later Middle Ages.

Because of the variety of perspectives and the comparative nature of these essays, the volume is not organized strictly by chronology, language, or religious tradition. Rather, it presents chapters in four conceptual clusters, with some material spanning a range of several centuries. Despite this breadth, each part approaches exegesis in terms of its expression of religious difference, be it by looking at the borders between religions (Parts 1 and 3), at the institutionalization of controversial reading and disputation (Part 2), or through adoption of vocabularies of distinction and power (Part 4). While these divisions are meant to help organize the essays into meaningful clusters that potentiate their arguments and conclusions, the clusters have been ordered in an attempt to highlight connections between each. Thus the first essay of each cluster after the first is meant to point back to the thematic focus of the previous cluster at the same time as it opens the new focus of the cluster of essays that follow it. This organization is meant to help bind the essays and clusters into a coherent volume with a shared purview, but it must also be reiter-

ated that these essays are not meant to provide a comprehensive picture of medieval exegetical or polemical traditions.

Part 1, entitled “Strategies of Reading on the Borders of Islam,” considers a number of examples of commentary and interaction between Muslim writers and those living in or near predominantly Muslim lands. Sarah Stroumsa’s essay provides a conceptual introduction to the volume by considering the figure of the Patriarch Abraham as developed by Jewish and Muslim philosophers in al-Andalus. In particular, she compares two specific cases, one Muslim and the other Jewish: that of the Cordoban Neoplatonist philosopher Ibn Masarra (d. 931) and that of Cordoban-born Aristotelian philosopher and rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides, d. 1204). After questioning the appropriateness of the term “Abrahamic religions” in comparing Judaism and Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, she shows that both writers evoke the figure of Abraham in parallel, albeit idiosyncratic, ways. Stroumsa compares Ibn Masarra’s unconventional discussion of Abraham as “ascending” to God through deductive contemplation of creation to traditional Muslim and Jewish characterizations of Abraham, noting the similarity of the ideas of both authors. She proposes a possible influence on Ibn Masarra’s thinking from Jewish mystical texts such as the *Sefer Yezira* and from contemporary Jewish philosophers such as Isaac Israeli. She then shows that Maimonides, in similar fashion, seems to have drawn his ideas about Abraham’s contemplative departure from Sabian polytheism in part from contemporary Muslim interpretations of the Sabians. Her analysis problematizes the theological appeal to Abraham as a common father figure at the same time as it traces a rich commerce of reading and interpreting across religious borders.

Sidney Griffith presents us with a similar picture of reading and commenting across religious lines, but among writers with a much more aggressive intention. His analysis treats the notes (*al-ḥawāshī*) made by one Ibn al-Maḥrūmah in the fourteenth century, written as glosses to the *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth* (*An Overview of Investigations into the Views of the Three Faiths*) by thirteenth-century Baghdādī Jew Ibn Kammūnah. This well-known text was a comparison of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, probably written in response to the anti-Jewish refutation *Ifḥām al-yahūd* (*Silencing the Jews*) by the twelfth-century convert from Judaism to Islam Samawʿal al-Maghribī. In his notes, written only for the parts on Judaism and Christianity, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah discusses in detail the Islamic notion of abrogation, focusing in particular on the

abrogation of the *sharī‘ah* (law) of Moses. By adopting Islamic views of Judaism such as those espoused by Samaw’al al-Maghribī and by attacking and rejecting Ibn Kammūnah’s arguments, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah is able to make use of the Muslim belief in the abrogation of Mosaic law as an implicit support for Christian claims of supersession. As Griffith explains, “Ibn al-Maḥrūmah used the current popularity of Ibn Kammūnah’s *Tanqīḥ* as the occasion to promote an idea elaborated earlier by scholars in his own Jacobite community about the abrogation of Jewish law as a reasonable *sharī‘ah* for the human community after the coming of the Messiah.” He argues that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s discussion shows signs of an “Islamicization of Christian apologetics,” which makes use of Islamic beliefs and anti-Jewish writing (based largely on exegetical arguments) to support his own views on Judaism. Griffith’s analysis of a Christian critique of a Jewish critique of Islam that was undertaken as a defense of Christian ideas vis-à-vis Judaism offers a rich and complex example of the mutual interactions between exegesis and polemical writing in the early fourteenth century.

Walid Saleh’s essay, “Al-Biqā‘ī Seen through Reuchlin: Reflections on the Islamic Relationship with the Bible,” begins with a comparison of al-Biqā‘ī (d. 1480), a Mamlūk scholar interested in the Hebrew Bible, and his younger contemporary Johannes Reuchlin (d. 1522), a Christian humanist and Hebraist who played a key role in introducing Hebrew study to many European universities. Provoked by the profound differences between these contemporary personages, Saleh provides a perceptive and elegant series of reflections on the differences between Muslim and Christian engagement with the Hebrew Bible. Beginning with a discussion of what he calls a “difference of emotionality” between their approaches to the Hebrew Bible, Saleh considers the notable *lack* of engagement with or interest in Christian and especially Jewish scriptures among many Muslim exegetes and intellectuals. Arguing that Islamic exegesis generally avoided explicit confrontation and discussion of the Bible for both theological and linguistic reasons—it neither made theological sense nor was it an important part of early Arabic philological studies—Saleh concludes that this ignorance or indifference was the basis of a practical acceptance of Jews within Islamic societies. In contrast to the polemical origins of Christian Hebraism, in which “the more Europe knew, the more the Jews would suffer,” the lack of research or interest in the Hebrew language and the Jewish religion among Muslim exegetes proved to be a bulwark against vilification and attack. “In this case, ignorance was a blessing.”

The second part of this book, entitled “Dominicans and Their Disputations,” looks at the efforts of the Dominican Order as it confronted Jewish and Muslim scriptural and exegetical texts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thomas Burman’s essay, “Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam,” provides a transition between the first and second parts, looking back to the examples of reading and exegesis undertaken “on the borders of Islam” and looking ahead to the disputations and treatises of the Dominican Order. Burman considers the lost source of a surviving sixteenth-century manuscript (Paris, BnF MS lat. 3394), which brings together Mark of Toledo’s Latin translation of the Qur’ān; the fifth chapter of Petrus Alfonsi’s *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* (*Dialogue against the Jews*), written against Islam; and the only known copy of the *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis aut patefaciens* (*Book of Denuding or Exposing, or the Discloser*), a Latin translation of an eleventh-century Arabic anti-Muslim treatise. Burman shows how two Dominican friars, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce and Ramon Martí, used or knew this manuscript, and then contrasts their approaches to Islamic sources. According to Burman, the different ways in which they read the Qur’ān and its exegesis and wrote about them in Latin texts explain to some extent the divergent fates of each writer among later Christian readers. Whereas Martí’s approach to Islamic sources, which would have limited impact on subsequent writers, included extensive consideration of Muslim exegetical literature and other writing, Riccoldo’s characterization, which would become widely influential, approached Islamic belief more narrowly by taking a literal understanding of the Qur’ān as its only basis. Burman also reminds us that the intersection of medieval disputational writing and exegesis was not an abstract affair, but was grounded in the concrete manuscript matrix through which originals and translations were read, interpreted, glossed, and copied.

The importance of Dominican representations of Islam on subsequent Christian understanding is further evident in Antoni Biosca i Bas’s essay on “The Anti-Muslim Discourse of Alfonso Buenhombre.” Buenhombre, a fourteenth-century Dominican, was the author of two anti-Jewish texts, including the *Epistola Rabbi Samuelis* (*Epistle of Rabbi Samuel*), which would end up being among the most widely copied and printed anti-Jewish tracts of the later Middle Ages. Numerous copies of this text, which takes the form of letters between two rabbis discussing Christian belief, contain a final chapter dedicated to Islam. Material for this final chapter in the *Epistola* was drawn from Buenhombre’s later work, the

Disputatio Abutalib (*Dispute of Abu Talib*), which similarly comprises letters, though between a Muslim and a Jew. As Biosca i Bas shows, Buenhombre falsely claimed to have translated the texts from Arabic and passed off as Muslim certain ideas about Islam drawn from Ramon Martí, Nicholas of Lyra, and other Christian writers. His analysis points to the importance among medieval Dominican exegetes of the appeal to “authentic” Jewish and Muslim sources, even to the extent of creating fictional characters and texts to offer “testimony” in support of Christian interpretations.

Ursula Ragacs considers how the writing of Ramon Martí might shed light on the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263 between Nahmanides and Friar Paul. This disputation, organized by James I of Aragon at the urging of Paul and the Dominicans in the circle of Ramon de Penyafort, was the first attempt by the friars to argue that some Jewish sources, especially postbiblical authorities such as the Talmud and the major exegetical midrashim, actually support Christian arguments in favor of accepting Jesus as the Messiah. After introducing the two sources by which the Barcelona Disputation is known—a Hebrew account by Nahmanides himself and a Latin protocol written by a Christian, probably for the Crown of Aragon—Ragacs compares their arguments with Ramon Martí’s writing, in particular his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* (*Muzzle of the Jews*) finished in 1267. By tracing the significant commonalities between the *Capistrum* and the arguments from the Latin and Hebrew accounts of the disputation, she proposes that Martí’s text might provide a means of inferring the existence of arguments that were not explicitly mentioned in either account. Her work offers a suggestive new approach to the historiography of the disputation by connecting it more directly with the texts produced by the Dominicans in its wake.

The next part of this book, “Authority and Scripture between Jewish and Christian Readers,” continues to focus on Jewish–Christian disputation but broadens the scope to consider the importance of other figures beyond the Dominican order and throughout the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Harvey Hames’s essay, “Reconstructing Thirteenth-Century Jewish–Christian Polemic: From Paris 1240 to Barcelona 1263 and Back Again,” connects with the theme of the previous part by considering the historiography of Dominican engagement with the Talmud and other postbiblical Hebrew sources while also going on to consider Jewish–Christian arguments more generally. Hames sees Nahmanides’s Hebrew account of the 1263 debate as a starting point for discussing similar documents from other thirteenth-century

Jewish-Christian disputations and conflicts, above all the “Talmud Trial” of the 1240s that took place in Paris after charges of blasphemy were brought against the Talmud by the converted Jew and Dominican Nicholas Donin. Hames compares the Hebrew account of the events in the 1240s (written, in the opinion of most scholars, soon afterwards by Joseph ben Nathan Official, author of the Hebrew *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*², or *Book of Joseph the Zealot*), with Nahmanides’s account of the Barcelona Disputation and with an anonymous Hebrew account of Friar Paul’s later harangue to the Jews of Paris in the early 1270s. By noting the parallels between the various Hebrew accounts, Hames suggests that the account of Joseph ben Nathan Official was actually written much later “to give succor and encouragement to a Jewish community under attack from different quarters” and was modeled on the earlier texts from Paris and Barcelona. His bold and original argument offers a new perspective for reading the Hebrew accounts of Dominican activity in the thirteenth century; it also shows that Christian exegesis and anti-Jewish argumentation were topics of constant concern among Jewish intellectuals and religious leaders in France and Spain.

Yosi Yisraeli also takes up the convert Pablo de Santa María’s responses to Nicholas of Lyra in his chapter, “A Christianized Sephardic Critique of Rashi’s *Peshaṭ* in Pablo de Santa María’s *Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra*.” Although many critics have tried to summarize Santa María’s exegetical theory on the basis of his prologue to the *Additiones*, in which he draws together a variety of scholastic and exegetical positions, Yisraeli is the first scholar to provide an extensive consideration of Pablo’s biblical hermeneutics based on his actual glosses on Lyra’s biblical commentary. He shows that Santa María is very critical of Lyra’s use of Rashi, above all because it constitutes a weakness in Christian arguments against Judaism. As he explains, “Lyra pretended to provide Christian readers with literal explanations that would benefit from the famous Jewish adherence to the letter, grammar, and historical context of the scripture, but Pablo recognized that Lyra was in fact drawing, via Rashi, on midrashic fables which even the Jews did not follow.” By showing how Santa María’s commentary was critical of Lyra’s uninformed reliance on Jewish sources without concern for their authoritative status, Yisraeli provides a valuable analysis of Santa María’s central importance in the exegetical contests of Jews and Christians in the fifteenth century and beyond.

Ángel Sáenz-Badillos discusses a unique exegetical project that was undertaken near Toledo only a few years before Santa María finished his

Additiones. The Castilian translation of the Hebrew Bible by Rabbi Moses Arragel of Guadalajara (a translation known to some as the Biblia de Alba because it was later acquired by the House of Alba, where it still resides among the holdings of the Fundación Casa de Alba), includes Christian and Jewish exegetical glosses together with a complete Castilian Bible based directly on the Hebrew text. As Sáenz-Badillos shows, Arragel attempted to be impartial in his presentation of Jewish and Christian exegetical views, allowing that “each person should believe what his religious community (*egleja*) said.” Arragel’s text, however, was glossed and “corrected” by Franciscan friars who oversaw the production of the final text. Thus, even if Arragel himself refrained from using his exegesis for polemical purposes, his Christian correctors did not, and Arragel’s stance can be seen as an anomaly in the world of dueling interreligious exegesis and translation.

The final part of this book, “Exegesis and Gender: Vocabularies of Difference,” reprises the historical and theological foci of the previous parts and takes them up in turn by addressing the theme of gender imagery in exegetical commentaries, polemical and otherwise. Alexandra Cuffel, looking back to the first part on texts from Islamic lands, addresses explicitly disputational writing in “Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis: Jesus as Antihero in *Toledot Yeshu*.” Cuffel here considers the dissemination of the anti-Christian text known as the *Life of Jesus* (*Toledot Yeshu*). Although much has been written about the text, the primary impetus of previous studies has been to uncover the origins and early history of the work, and less attention has been paid to tracing its later medieval dissemination. Cuffel shows that recent discoveries of many more versions of the *Life of Jesus* in Judeo-Arabic in the Cairo Genizah and elsewhere have enabled such research to include the Islamic world in a significant way. In this light, Cuffel suggests interpreting the text in terms of oral epic tradition in the Muslim world. Comparing the text to other well-known oral story cycles such as *Alf laylah wa-laylah* (*1001 Nights*), she shows that the *Life of Jesus* shares certain elements with these works, which were circulating in oral and written forms among both Muslims and Jews, and was transformed in its Jewish versions according to the vagaries of circumstance and taste. “Such polemical stories,” she notes, “had meaning in the Muslim community for much the same reasons that they did in the Jewish one.” Focusing on the figure of Jesus, Cuffel explores the ways in which various versions of the text commented upon and played with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish notions of humanity, proph-

ecy, divinity, and magic to create a gendered attack in which Jesus was the ultimate religious rebel, doomed by the circumstances of his illegitimate, “menstrual” conception to turn against religious truth and actively work against God and all believers. Her analysis connects the notion of gender as a tool of religious argumentation with the analysis of interreligious and interlinguistic exegesis elaborated in earlier essays in this volume.

Nina Caputo, in her essay “Sons of God, Daughters of Man, and the Formation of Human Society in Nahmanides’s Exegesis,” looks back to the second section on the disputations with the Dominicans. She provides a useful link between the focus on Jewish–Christian engagement, the influence of Nahmanides in particular, and the place of gender as a theme in exegetical commentary. She considers Nahmanides’s exegesis of the charged scriptural verses at Genesis 6:1–4 (describing the coupling of the “sons of God” with the “daughters of men”), showing how he diverged from both Jewish and Christian interpretations by affirming that the “sons of God” were to be understood literally. Similarly, his unconventional interpretation of this gendered image from Genesis was a means of addressing a cardinal point of divergence in Jewish–Christian debate, viz. the character of antediluvian humans and the nature and effects of human sin. Her discussion unites the historical discussion of Jewish–Christian disputation in the late thirteenth century with a broader thematic analysis of the place of gender in exegetical interpretations of identity and individual difference.

The final two essays return to the third part on Jewish and Christian exegetical strategies, reviewing them with respect to their use of gendered language. Esperanza Alfonso’s essay analyzes the exegetical treatment of one recurrent image from the book of Proverbs (2:16–19, 5:1–23, 6:20–31, and most significantly Chapter 7), that of the *ishshah zarah*, ‘strange woman’. After repeated warnings against her dangers, she is described as an alien who ensnares and deceives young men through wily tricks. Considered as the countertype of Wisdom (portrayed as a woman in Proverbs 1–9) and the *eshet hayil*, ‘woman of strength’, of Proverbs 31:10–31, the strange woman provoked abundant commentary among postbiblical Jewish exegetes who interpreted her as a symbol of heresy, idolatry, the study of secular rather than religious sciences, or primal matter itself. Alfonso focuses on a little-known group of biblical commentaries written between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries to explore the ways in which Jewish exegetes in a post-Maimonidean era used the image not only to convey changing and conflicting views on gender, but also to

identify and protect purity from pollution, the sacred from the secular, orthodoxy from heterodoxy, and ultimately, the community from the Other. These writers “portray the community’s fight against radical allegorists among its own, who are perceived and portrayed as a threat to the integrity of the community’s boundaries.” Alfonso’s analysis shows how images of gender and sexuality could be used as a touchstone for revealing changing intellectual trends in exegesis, philosophy, and even disputational writing.

The final essay, by Steven Kruger, “Exegesis as Autobiography: The Case of Guillaume de Bourges,” weaves together a number of the different themes raised in previous essays, such as exegesis, Jewish–Christian controversy, conversion, and gender, by looking at the biblical commentaries of the thirteenth-century Jew Guillaume de Bourges, converted to Christianity under the aegis of the archbishop of Bourges, Guillaume de Dongoen. By examining the identification of Guillaume de Bourges with the woman taken in adultery (from John 8:1–11), Kruger shows how the author worked to subvert the authority of his critics by embracing rather than resisting their imposed identity. In exploring this strategy, Kruger also links Guillaume with other convert-writers such as Pablo de Santa María and the fourteenth-century Hebrew author Abner of Burgos / Alfonso of Valladolid, all of whom pertain to a single tradition of blending polemical writing, exegesis, and autobiography. The example of Guillaume de Bourges represents, for Kruger, “one otherwise unknown convert’s attempt to write himself into a secure position within the Christian community he has recently joined,” and his work calls us to question “when precisely medieval exegesis might function as autobiography, just as medieval autobiography so often depends upon the exegetical.”

Although the essays presented in this volume are diverse in their historical, linguistic, and religious foci, they all share the implicit argument that commentary on scripture was, in the Middle Ages, a gesture bound up with the definition of community identity and the limits of orthodoxy, and that commentary on the scriptures of other, rival communities was inherently a means of limning the contours of difference between faiths. Although these essays pursue only a few of the many possible approaches that might be taken in exploring the deep connections between medieval exegesis and interreligious disputation, they offer together a new and exciting body of work, serving at once as the tangible results of the 2011 conference on Medieval Exegesis and a provocative invitation to further inquiry.

PART I

Strategies of Reading on the Borders of Islam

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1 The Father of Many Nations: Abraham in al-Andalus

Sarah Stroumsa

The now commonly used term “Abrahamic religions” probably has its roots in the writings of the French scholar of Islamic mysticism Louis Massignon, but only relatively recently did this term begin to appear as a regular feature of scholarly discourse in religious studies. Previously, one referred to the trio of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity as “the religions of the Book” or “the monotheistic religions.” The concept of “Abrahamic religions” seeks to include Islam in the religious legacy of the monotheistic and mostly Christian West and stresses the bridges between the Qur’ānic and the biblical traditions through the figure of Abraham. This term thus further broadens the earlier concept of “Judeo-Christian tradition,” which sought to include Judaism in the Western tradition, until then identified to a large extent with Christianity.¹

In the modern study of Islamic Spain or al-Andalus, the notion of Abrahamic religions pairs with another one, which has similar inclusive connotations: that of “the three cultures” (*las tres culturas*)—namely, the communities of Muslims, Christians, and Jews—that supposedly lived peacefully side by side in medieval Spain, contributing equally to the formation of the golden age of al-Andalus, from the tenth to the twelfth centuries.² The uniformly rosy picture of a religiously and culturally tolerant al-Andalus is both misleading and anachronistic, a fact that has been pointed out many times. As I mention elsewhere, a much more judicious and apt description of the religious situation in al-Andalus is the one offered by Thomas Burman, who speaks of the “pluralistic circumstances” that prevailed there.³ Beyond its anachronism, however, the idea of *las tres culturas* is arithmetically wrong. Unlike the Muslim orient, where at times Muslims, Jews, and Christians were indeed active members of one intellectual community, in the Iberian Peninsula the three communities

hardly ever formed a contemporaneous intellectual triangle. Instead, we witness in most periods the ruling religious majority (Christians in the north of the peninsula, Muslims in the south) interacting intellectually mostly with one or the other of the two minority religions, while the third plays only a minor role. In the period that concerns us in this chapter, from the tenth to the twelfth centuries and in the area controlled by Islam, relatively few Christians participated in a significant way in the scientific, philosophical, or theological endeavor, whereas the role of the Jews as custodians and transmitters of the philosophical tradition was matched by their role as active participants in the intellectual discourse.⁴

Just as the idea of *las tres culturas* distorts the picture of the religious situation in the Iberian Peninsula, the sweeping use of the locution “Abrahamic religions” regarding al-Andalus can also create a misleading, exaggeratedly harmonious image of the situation that prevailed there in the Middle Ages. In the Andalusī context, therefore, this locution too must be used only with great caution and with many caveats. This being said, however, the figure of the patriarch Abraham himself seems to have played a peculiar role in the development of philosophy in al-Andalus. In this chapter I focus on two examples of this role, the first from the very beginning of philosophy in al-Andalus, the other from its acme. Whether or not these two examples mark the contours of a wider phenomenon, which would require that we then fill the missing links between them, remains to be investigated, and I hope to further pursue the questions raised here.

The first example concerns Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Jabalī, known as Ibn Masarra, who is commonly considered to be the first *muwallad* (i.e. indigenous Andalusī) philosopher. Born in Cordoba in 269/883, Ibn Masarra had traveled to both North Africa and Mecca but returned to his native al-Andalus and died in his mountainous retreat in the Cordovan Sierra in 319/931. Ibn Masarra’s writings were considered lost until 1972, when Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Ja‘far discovered in the Chester Beatty Collection in Dublin two of his works,⁵ *Kitāb khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf* (*The Book of the Properties of Letters*) and *Risālat al-i‘tibār* (*The Epistle on Contemplation*).⁶ From the examination of these two short treatises, Ibn Masarra emerges clearly as a Neoplatonic thinker.⁷ His mystical philosophy is reminiscent of what can also be found in Fāṭimī-Ismā‘īlī writings of the same period, and, as clearly demonstrated by Godefroid de Callataÿ, it shows the marks of direct influence of the encyclopedic com-

pilation known as *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* (*Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*).⁸ Ibn Masarra's two treatises are remarkably thought out, written in a taut, poetic language where every word seems to be carefully chosen, every sentence preparing the ground for the idea that is developed in the next one. Despite their brevity, the treatises reveal the complex and highly sophisticated Neoplatonic worldview of Ibn Masarra. His language borrows much from the Qurʾān, and the philosophical terminology he employs can be found later in the writings of other mystical philosophers in al-Andalus, from the Jewish Solomon ibn Gabirol in the eleventh century to the Muslim Ibn ʿArabī in the thirteenth.⁹

A particular, original trait of Ibn Masarra's thought is the way he uses the concept of contemplation (*iʿtibār*). Although this concept is found in many theological works before him, Ibn Masarra's short epistle gives prominence to contemplation and highlights its importance with unprecedented clarity, and the meaning it has in Ibn Masarra's writings does not appear in this focused, precise, and systematic way in previous Muʿtazilī, mystical, or philosophical writings. For Ibn Masarra, contemplation is a mental practice in which the contemplator gradually ascends through the different levels of existence to the uppermost levels of knowledge and to an encounter with his Creator. Each level of existence indicates its dependency upon the level above it. The ascending process culminates in the realization of the existence of a superior, transcendent being who is the wise, powerful and sole creator and governor of the universe as described in the Qurʾān. Ibn Masarra compares this ascending mental process to climbing a ladder. This image, which is found already in the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*), and which appears frequently in later philosophical and mystical texts, seems to have become a typical trait of Andalusī mystical philosophy, both Muslim and Jewish, but Ibn Masarra seems to be the first Andalusī thinker to use this imagery.¹⁰

The process of contemplation as a whole follows the scriptural model of Abraham. According to the Qurʾān, Abraham (Ibrāhīm) came to know God after observing the successive, daily decline of the heavenly bodies, thus realizing their limitations and transiency (Q. 6:75–9).¹¹ Although Ibn Masarra does not explicitly cite this Qurʾānic passage, he has it clearly in mind when he speaks of “the prophecy of Abraham, peace be upon him, contemplating the kingdom's created things (*iʿtibār khalāʾiq al-malakūt*) in search of an indication (*dalāla*) [that would direct him, i.e., Abraham] to his creator.”¹²

The Qurʾānic image of Abraham as a contemplator goes back to Jewish apocryphal literature from the Second Temple period (such as the *Book of Jubilees*), and to Jewish Hellenistic literature (e.g., Philo). It reappears later in midrashic literature, which describes the infant Abraham hiding in the cave from the wrath of King Nimrod, observing the daily movement of the heavenly bodies and deducing from their cycles of rising and setting that none of them rules the world, thus inferring the existence of the one Lord and Creator of the universe.¹³

Beyond the thinly veiled reference to Qurʾān 6:75–9, the Qurʾānic narrative of Abraham’s search is echoed throughout Ibn Masarra’s epistle. Ibn Masarra’s search is similar to Abraham’s on yet another significant point: Unlike most Neoplatonists, whose descriptions of the hypostases move from above downwards, and as such from the more luminous and splendid realms to the darker and coarser ones, Ibn Masarra, like Abraham, moves from the lower levels of existence to the higher ones, to which the lower realms are subjugated. This puts the focus on the human intellectual effort involved in the quest, through which a human being can reach the level of certitude (*yaqīn*), be granted revelation, reward and be enlightened, and for which all human beings are prepared by means of innate nature (*fiṭra*).

It is noteworthy that Abraham’s name, which appears toward the end of the epistle, is the only name mentioned in it. Heresiographical texts discussing Ibn Masarra tell us that, during his travels, he spent some time in the North-African city of Kairawan (in contemporary Tunisia), where an increasingly prosperous Jewish community retained links with the Fāṭimid court.¹⁴ A prominent figure in this milieu was the Jewish court physician and Neoplatonic philosopher Isaac Israeli (d. 950). We have no evidence of personal contacts between Ibn Masarra and Isaac Israeli, but the two surviving treatises of Ibn Masarra testify to his curiosity (not to say fascination) regarding Jews and their lore, and they bear traces of encounters, direct or indirect, with Jewish texts. In particular, Ibn Masarra seems to have been exposed to Jewish speculations on *Sefer Yeẓira* (*The Book of Creation*), a work of alphabet-inspired mysticism where the Hebrew letters serve as God’s tools in the creation of the universe.¹⁵ This book was much in vogue in the tenth century. Both Isaac Israeli and Saʿadiah Gaon wrote commentaries on it, and Israeli’s disciple Dūnāsh ibn Tamīm tells us that Israeli’s correspondence from Kairawan with the young Saʿadiah, then still residing in Egypt, was also relevant to both their later

commentaries on this book.¹⁶ *Sefer Yezira* ends with the following statement:

When Abraham, our Father, understood [this mystery of the creation]; when he figured it out, using both his imagination and reasoning; when he searched and contemplated, and his efforts were successful, then the Holy One, Blessed be He, appeared to him and recited upon him the verse [Jer. 1:5]: “Before I created you in your mother’s belly I knew you, before you came out of the womb I sanctified you, I have made you a prophet to the nations.” He made him His friend, and He made a pact with Abraham and his progeny for eternity.¹⁷

A loose interpretation of this last paragraph is at the root of the commonly repeated claim that *Sefer Yezira* presents itself as having been actually composed by Abraham.¹⁸ Its carefully worded terminology presents the intellectual and spiritual process that led Abraham to recognize his Creator, and consequently to God’s choice of Abraham as His friend. The verse from Jeremiah 1:5 that concludes the paragraph presents Abraham’s contemplation and God’s friendship as things that were granted to Abraham from the womb, before his birth, and that made him suitable to be a prophet to all nations. It stands to reason that the particular status of Abraham in Ibn Masarra’s epistle—the contemplative process that begins with Abraham’s inborn knowledge, and the fact that this inborn knowledge is also given to all human beings—was inspired by Ibn Masarra’s contacts with Jews and their reflections on *Sefer Yezira*.

Ibn Masarra’s interest in Abraham, however, also found expression in a nonverbal way. Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm ibn Bakr al-Tanūkhī was a follower of Ibn Masarra who had also accompanied him on his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Al-Tanūkhī recounts that after returning to al-Andalus, Ibn Masarra constructed in his mountain retreat an exact replica of the house of “Māriya *Umm Ibrāhīm*, the Prophet’s slave-girl.”¹⁹ Ibn Masarra’s fascination with Māriya, the prophet Muḥammad’s Copt slave-girl, may well have been connected to her association with magic, a topic which was at the heart of Ibn Masarra’s philosophical mysticism.²⁰ But in this account, al-Tanūkhī seems to stress the fact that Māriya was an *umm walad*, a slave girl manumitted by her master after bearing him a child. In this case, the child was the Prophet’s only son, named Ibrāhīm. As we have seen above, Ibn Masarra’s writings testify to the particular significance he accorded to *Ibrāhīm* (Abraham), the contemplator-prophet.

Whereas other elements in Ibn Masarra's image of the Patriarch Abraham can be shown to have been shared with Judaism, Ibn Masarra's fascination with another *Ibrāhīm*, the son of the Prophet Muḥammad, highlights the entirely Muslim flavor of Abraham in Ibn Masarra's thought.

Ibn Masarra's process of contemplation, which he boldly and concisely defines and illustrates, associating it with the figure of Abraham, seems to have worked its way into later Andalusī thought. Abū Bakr ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185), for example, expands on such an ascending process in his description of Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān's gradual achievement of illumination.²¹ Although Ibn Ṭufayl does not allude explicitly to the figure of Abraham, his understanding of the contemplative process and of its religious meaning seems to be informed by Ibn Masarra's interpretation of the Qur'ānic Abraham. Another pertinent example is Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Rushd (the Latin Averroes), in whose *Faṣl al-maḳāl* (*Decisive Treatise*) the notion of contemplation (*i'tibār*) figures as a key concept, albeit in a very different intellectual framework.²² Furthermore, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Averroes refers specifically to Abraham's observation of the kingdom of heaven and earth, and like Ibn Masarra, he cites Qur'ān 6:75.²³

A similar and explicit understanding of Abraham does appear in our second example, which comes from Moses Maimonides (d. 1204). Maimonides stands at the peak of philosophy in al-Andalus, and also at its turning point, just before *falsafa* (in the sense of Aristotelian philosophy in Arabic) in al-Andalus is drawing to an end. All of Maimonides's writings on which I will rely here were composed after he left al-Andalus, first to North Africa and thence to Egypt. Maimonides, however, regarded himself throughout his life as an Andalusī Jew—*Sefaradi*—and indeed he can also be seen to rely upon his Andalusī background in his perception of Abraham.

The significance of Abraham for Maimonides is already underlined by evidence external to his writings: Abraham is the name he chose to give to his only son;²⁴ and the pious blessing with which he chooses to open all his works is not the ubiquitous Jewish formula "In thy name, O Merciful" (*be-shimkha raḥmana*), the most common Jewish equivalent in this period to the Muslim *Basmalah*, but rather a formula that stems from the biblical history of Abraham: "In the name of the Lord, God of

the World” (see Gen. 21:35). This external evidence is borne out by what Maimonides says in his works, and in particular, by the importance of Abraham in Maimonides’s analysis of the history of religions.

In the *Laws Regarding Idolatry* in his Hebrew legal codex, the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides briefly summarizes the early history of humanity from the time of Enosh, and its prevalent idolatrous worldview, when all peoples worshipped the heavenly bodies. This idolatrous worldview, to which Maimonides also dedicates much attention in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, he calls by the generic name “the Sabian religion.” He identifies it with the religion of what was known in his time as “the Sabians of Ḥarrān,” and of course also with the ambient religion encountered by Abraham in both Chaldean Ur and in Ḥarrān.²⁵ Texts and traditions claiming descent from these Sabians and from Ḥarrān were at that time widely circulating in al-Andalus: texts of astrology, magic, alchemy, and the sciences of the occult. For Maimonides, the most important among these texts (*akbar kitāb fī dhālīka*) was *al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya* (*Nabatean Agriculture*).²⁶ In his *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides summarizes what he sees as the Sabian account of the story of Abraham:

At the end of the story they said that the King had imprisoned our Father Abraham . . . and that he continued to polemicize with them while being in their prison. Then the King was afraid that Abraham would bring harm on his governance and that he would lead people to abandon their religion, so he exiled him to the most distant part of Syria, having first confiscated all his property. This is how they tell it.

You can find this story told in detail in *The Nabatean Agriculture*, but they do not mention what is recorded in our true traditions, nor the revelation that was bestowed upon him, because they treat him as a liar, since he objected to their corrupt opinion.²⁷

The Sabian version of the story of Abraham as portrayed here uses familiar material that appears in the Bible and midrash as well as in the Qur’ān and in the literature of the Muslim stories of the Prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*). But in the Sabian version, Abraham is portrayed as evil, an enemy of religion. This version can thus be seen as a reversal of the monotheistic story of the Patriarch, a reversal of the biblical narrative of the kind that can be found in Gnostic writings.²⁸ For Maimonides, the Sabian—i.e., idolatrous—version of the story accurately reflects the fact

that Abraham was indeed the beginning of their end. The Sabian religion prevailed, says Maimonides, only “until the birth of the Pillar of the World, our Father Abraham.”

Like Ibn Masarra, Maimonides taps into the midrashic account of the infant Abraham, who comes to know his Creator through contemplation, and says, “He started roaming in his mind, when he was still little . . . and his heart was roaming and understanding.”²⁹ But Abraham does not remain a contemplative recluse. For Maimonides, Abraham was the first activist prophet, who used his own judgment to attain true monotheism and then rebelled against the ambient Sabian polytheism. Maimonides depicts Abraham as standing alone, acting tirelessly to spread the word, “and he was traveling and preaching, and summoning people, going from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom, until he reached the land of Canaan, where ‘he called the name of the Lord, God of the World’” (Gen. 21:35).³⁰ Abraham had to suffer the violent reaction of his contemporaries, and he was rewarded with divine blessing, that in him “all the families of the earth [would] be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). For Maimonides, Abraham is indeed the blessing for all the families of the earth, the father of monotheists past, present, and future.

This universalist image of Abraham permeates Maimonides’s thought, but I will dwell here only on one instance of it. It pertains to one specific legal decision, regarding what was in Maimonides’s time a wholly anachronistic and theoretical law concerning the new fruits brought to the Temple. The biblical text (Deut. 26:1–3) decrees that he who brings the first fruits to the Temple has to accompany this act with the recitation of a short text, explaining the meaning of the offering, and thanking God for the fruit of his ancestral land. According to the Mishnah (*Bikkurim* 1:4) and the Babylonian Talmud, converts to Judaism are expected to bring the offering, but not to recite the text, since they cannot in truth say, as dictated by Deuteronomy 26:3: “the land that God has sworn to our fathers [to give them].” Curiously, Maimonides ignores this ruling, allowing—and by the same token, obligating—proselytes to recite the text. Moshe Halbertal, who points out Maimonides’s idiosyncrasy in this case, argues that this is one of the cases where Maimonides chose to rely on the Palestinian (rather than the Babylonian) Talmud, thus using his phenomenal familiarity with the whole body of the canonical texts and exercising independence of ruling. For Halbertal, this case allows us a glimpse into what he calls “Maimonides’s lab.”³¹ This is certainly true, but while this explanation highlights the technique that Maimonides uses,

it leaves open the question of why Maimonides chose to use this technique in this particular case, and to depart from the Babylonian tradition. Why was it important for him that proselytes should recite the biblical text, and why did he look for a canonical text that would allow him to condone it?

An examination of this case in the broader context of Maimonides's view of proselytes shows that in this case (as probably in many others) Maimonides's legal, or halakhic, independence serves a basic philosophical outlook regarding the evolving status of religion in society. As mentioned above, Maimonides dedicated many pages to analyzing the intellectual and spiritual ambiance in which Abraham was raised, which he identified with the Sabian world. In order to understand this world, Maimonides conducted thorough research, reading books of alchemy, magic, and astronomy that were widely circulating in the al-Andalus of his youth, and which he believed were the product of idolatry, since they were related to the cult of the heavenly bodies. In his view, this idolatrous environment is the background against which not only Abraham's mission, but all the laws of Moses must be understood. The relevance of the Sabian literature to understanding biblical law and historiography is a major insight that informs Maimonides's writings. As he emphatically states on several occasions, he regarded it as his very own discovery, and considered it to be his breakthrough in understanding human religiosity. Maimonides was convinced that, by analyzing what he believed to be the Sabian literature, he had reached the very root of the primitive religiosity, or what we would call today "religious psychology." He was also convinced that this literature allowed him to decipher the way the Torah accommodates this primitive religiosity and at the same time endeavors to refine it by means of education. In the perennial fight against universal idolatry, Abraham was, so to speak, the first convert, and as such, the father of all converts after him.

We can now go back to Halbertal's above-mentioned metaphor: Maimonides's interpretation of the figure of Abraham, as the first contemplator in history (as opposed to the prehistorical figure of Adam) and the first rebel against Sabian idolatry, is the key to understanding what happened in "Maimonides's lab" in the case of the proselyte's recitation of the blessing on the new fruits. This is plainly stated by Maimonides in his explanation of the relevant Mishnaic text. In his *Commentary on the Mishnah*, written in Judeo-Arabic while he was still living in Fes, Maimonides cites the Mishnaic Hebrew text, and then says:

All this is clear. The legal decision, however, is that the convert brings the first fruits and [that he does] read the prayer. They [the rabbis who made this legal decision] relied on God's words to Abraham [Gen. 17:5]: "For I have made you the father of many nations." They said: "You were first the father of Aram, now you have become father of the whole world." This is why the convert can say [Deut. 26:3]: "As You have sworn to our fathers," for Abraham is the father of all people, for he taught them religion.³²

Maimonides chose to rely on the Palestinian Talmud because it allowed him to treat proselytes according to his profound conviction about conversion. For him, the proselyte who casts away his idolatrous upbringing and turns to his inborn potential of true monotheistic religiosity undergoes a total transformation. In reaffirming his inborn genuine religious knowledge, he becomes a true descendant of Abraham and gets all the ancestral rights that come with it, including the right to say, "the land you promised to our fathers." Maimonides is consistent in this inclusive attitude to proselytes, as can be seen in yet another, quite famous, instance. In an unusually long and vehement responsum sent to the proselyte Obadya, whose teacher responded to his question by calling him a fool, Maimonides goes out of his way to make up for the teacher's slighting remark. He berates the petulant teacher, and reassures his correspondent of the proselyte's high religious rank, saying, "God did not call you a fool [*ksil*] but rather a wise one [*maskil*], one who understands, who is clear-eyed and walking in the right path, a disciple of Abraham our father, who left his fathers and his land to follow God."³³

Let me summarize: At two crucial points in the history of Andalusí thought we find the figure of Abraham playing a key role. The Muslim Ibn Masarra in the tenth century and the Jewish Moses Maimonides in the twelfth, both present the patriarch Abraham as the model of independent contemplation, where inborn human resources allow a human being—every human being—to find the way to the Creator. The reclusive Ibn Masarra is interested only in the contemplative process of the individual, who is focused on his way to enlightenment. Maimonides, on the other hand, as the head of a community as well as an historian of religion, shows concern for the spiritual well-being of the vast majority of common people—those who, if left to their own devices, may err and wander off the monotheistic path. He therefore sees the contemplative pro-

cess in the context of other inborn psychological forces, which, if not controlled and refined, may lead naturally to idolatrous, ignorant barbarism. For him, it is individual contemplation that directed Abraham, already as an infant, to his true creator; but living, as Abraham was, in a pagan world, he extended a universal monotheistic call, a call to all nations.

Both Ibn Masarra and Maimonides rely on the interpretation of their respective canonical texts, but the interpretation of each one of them also taps into literary traditions beyond his own: Jewish mystical traditions for Ibn Masarra, Muslim ethnographic traditions and their depiction of Sabian lore in the case of Maimonides.³⁴ One is tempted to draw a continuous line between these two points in Andalusí thought, and indeed there are indications that some of the issues presented here appear elsewhere in Andalusí thought. Whether or not these add up to a typical Andalusí exegetical tradition, however, must remain the task of further research.

2 Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's Notes on Ibn Kammūnah's *Examination of the Three Religions*

THE ISSUE OF THE ABROGATION OF MOSAIC LAW

Sidney Griffith

Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ*

In mid-March of the year 1280–81, the Jewish philosopher of Baghdad, ‘Izz al-Dawla Sa‘d ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūnah (d. 1284) finished writing the famous book he published under the title: *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth* (*An Overview of Investigations into the Views of the Three Faiths*).¹ It was an unaccustomed topic for this otherwise relentlessly philosophical and scientific writer² and he probably undertook the project, as we shall see, at least in part as a response to the earlier, polemical work of the Jewish convert to Islam, Samaw‘al ibn Yaḥyā al-Maghribī’s (d. 1174), *Silencing the Jews* (*Ifḥām al-yahūd*).³ One might also think of the *Tanqīḥ* as a work done somewhat in the spirit of Judah Halevi’s (c. 1075–1141) *Kuzari*, written in Arabic and completed in its final form around 1140, similarly a reasoned defense of the claims of Judaism to be the true religion vis-à-vis Christianity and Islam.⁴

Ibn Kammūnah’s work, which its modern editor, the late Moshe Perlmann, styled “a thirteenth-century essay in comparative religion,” contains a general discussion of the nature and role of the phenomenon of prophecy in human society, after which the author examines the claims of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam regarding true prophecy and true religion, concluding that the case for the claim of Judaism to be the true religion is the strongest. Three or four years later, Ibn Kammūnah was attacked by a mob in Baghdad, reportedly furious at the treatment of Islam in his book, a development that precipitated Ibn Kammūnah’s flight

from the city and his death later the same year at his son's home in Ḥilla on the Euphrates, not far from Kūfa. In the sequel, according to reports, several Muslim authors composed tracts against Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ*, in which they took issue with the author's presentation of the religious claims of Islam and responded to them from the perspective of Judaism; unfortunately these texts have not survived the vicissitudes of time. Then in the early fourteenth century a "Jacobite" Christian writer, Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Maḥrūmah (d. c. 1354) wrote a series of critical notes (*al-ḥawāshī*) that he added as glosses in the margins of a copy of the full text of Ibn Kammūnah's chapters on the Jews and the Christians in the *Tanqīḥ*; he ignored the chapters on prophecy and on Islam. These notes, with their focus on the idea of the abrogation of the *sharī'ah* of Moses, are the focus of the first part of the present essay.⁵ In the sequel, we shall briefly reflect on the Islamic context in which the concept of abrogation (*al-naskh*) suggested itself to Christian apologists and polemicists as a useful line of reasoning in the on-going discussion of the discernment of true prophecy and true religion.

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's Marginal Comments

Not much is known about Ibn al-Maḥrūmah personally; his full name is Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ya'qūb ibn Nakhtūmā al-Khabbāz ibn al-Maḥrūmah. From a variety of sources, one might conclude that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, who lived in Mardīn, in what is now southeastern Turkey, flourished in the 1290s and that he died before the year 1354. Not surprisingly, as a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, he knew Syriac well; his copy of the *Book of the Dove* by the polymath Bar Hebraeus survives and is now preserved in the collections of the Oriental Institute in the University of Chicago. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah also contributed an introduction to the Arabic version of Bar Hebraeus's famous work. In all probability, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah wrote his marginal glosses to Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ* between 1333 and 1340.⁶

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's *Ḥawāshī* (*Critical Notes*) appear in the latest of the five manuscripts that contain Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ*, a text copied in Mardīn by a Christian scribe, one Mas'ūd ibn Arjūk, in the year 1354–55; it is now kept in Rome's Biblioteca Angelica.⁷ While modern scholars had long known of the *Ḥawāshī*, it was not until 1965 that selections from them were published and discussed by Moshe Perlmann.⁸ The full edition of Ibn Kammūnah's text with Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's notes by Ḥabīb

Bacha appeared in 1984.⁹ But with one brief exception, the *Ḥawāshī* have not been systematically studied.¹⁰ The present essay discusses Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's views on the abrogation of the *sharī'ah* of Moses, suggesting that his view was influenced by current Muslim understandings of the notion of the abrogation of scriptural legal prescriptions.

The Mongol Era and Jewish–Christian Relations

Polemics between Jews and Christians readily carried over from late antiquity into early Islamic times, where they became a staple in the ever-popular genres of interreligious controversy. Indeed one could make the case that in the world of Islam, where Christians and Jews alike were politically disenfranchised and lived as *dhimmi* (protected) populations, controversies between the two communities became both more commonplace and more evenhanded, given the fact that in the Islamic milieu, Christian hegemony, heretofore in force in the territories of the eastern Roman Empire, had disappeared, while the older, religious themes of mutual rejection between Jews and Christians continued. Indeed, in the Islamic world, both Christians and Muslims employed anti-Jewish themes in their respective polemics.¹¹ But then in the thirteenth century, in Mesopotamia and the milieu of Baghdad, conditions changed once again for a season. In the year 1258, the Mongol khan Hūlagu (reg. 1256–65) conquered Baghdad and inaugurated an era of Mongol rule that initially seemed to show some favor to Jews and Christians, to the disadvantage of Muslims. At the time, one overeager Armenian writer even proclaimed Hūlagu and his Christian wife to be “the new Constantine and Helen . . . instruments of vengeance against the enemies of Christ.”¹² But the euphoria was short-lived; the first Mongol khan to become a Muslim converted in the year 1282 and by the first third of the fourteenth-century persecutions of Christians and other *dhimmi* populations became common. Then, after Tamerlane (1336–1405) conquered Baghdad in 1392, as Jean Fiey has observed, Christianity all but disappeared from southern Iraq and the milieu of Baghdad, retreating northward to the area of Mosul and the Plain of Nineveh.¹³

Ibn Kammūnah finished his *Tanqīḥ* in the year prior to Il-Khan Tegüder-Aḥmad's conversion to Islam. The first of three hostile Muslim responses to Ibn Kammūnah's work, entitled *al-Durr al-maṇḍūd fi l-radd alā faylasūf al-yahūd* (*Arranged Pearls in Refutation of Jewish Philosophers*), was composed by one Muẓaffar al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Sā'ātī,

who died in the year 1294,¹⁴ presumably just as Muslims returned to governmental favor. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah wrote his *Ḥawāshī* some thirty years later, when, as Fiey put it, night was once again falling over Christian–Muslim relations in northern Mesopotamia.¹⁵ As we shall see, most of his energy was focused on refuting Ibn Kammūnah's apology for Judaism, and his particular concern was to support the idea of the abrogation (*al-naskh*) of the Mosaic Law.

The Agenda of Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's *Ḥawāshī*

Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Maḥrūmah wrote marginal comments only on passages in Ibn Kammūnah's chapters on Judaism and Christianity. He keyed each of his marginal notes to a particular statement or passage in the *Tanqīḥ*. Eighty-seven of Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's 133 notes are glosses on passages in the chapter on Judaism, leaving only forty-six relatively brief notes for the chapter on Christianity, in which he sometimes refers the reader back to his remarks on a passage in the preceding chapter.

At this remove in time, with its scarcity of evidence, we can only guess at Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's motives for writing the *Ḥawāshī*. In the very first note (*ḥāshiyah*) he says only, "Something has come up to require me to write these *ḥawāshī* on what this book says about the religions of the Jews and the Christians, and not on anything else."¹⁶ What came up? One can only speculate, but perhaps it was the book itself, its popularity, and the convincing quality of its reasoning that moved Ibn al-Maḥrūmah to add his notes to two chapters of the full copy of the *Tanqīḥ*.

Given, as we shall see, both the respectful remarks Ibn al-Maḥrūmah makes about Ibn Kammūnah here and there in the text, and the polemical tone and ad hominem choice of words and titles that he uses in the course of his glosses, one can only surmise that in the Christian milieu of Mardīn in the first half of the fourteenth century, Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ* commanded a measure of respect that the Jacobite community of scholars there found threatening. But in what connection would the book have roused a substantial antipathy among Christians? On the one hand, there is, of course, the traditional rivalry between Jews and Christians and a strong tradition of anti-Jewish polemic among Christian apologists, especially in the larger, geographical regions of Aramaic heritage, both Jewish and Christian, where communal intermingling and even conversion had been an issue since early Christian times. On the other hand, by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the

Arabic-speaking, Islamic milieu, there was already an abundance of apologetic texts written in Arabic by both Christians and Muslims on the claims of both Christianity and Islam to be the true prophetic religion, according to which alone the one God wished to be worshipped. The entry of Ibn Kammūnah's well-reasoned book into this oft-rehearsed controversy could not but present a challenge to both Muslims and Christians.

But there is also another factor to be considered. Most of Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's concern in his *Hawāshī*, as we shall see, is with the issue of the abrogation (*al-naskh*) of the *sharī'ah* of Moses. This was a complicated matter for Christian scholars because they traditionally both rejected the binding force of some of the Torah's statutes and commandments as a viable code of law for daily life—a *sharī'ah*, as Ibn al-Maḥrūmah would call it—and at the same time they upheld the divine inspiration of the Torah, along with the other books of the Old Testament, especially as the depository of the signs and prophecies by which the Messiah would be recognized when finally he came. So what could have been the reason for Ibn al-Maḥrūmah to argue so strongly on behalf of the notion of the abrogation of the Mosaic *sharī'ah*, and in what sense could he have understood the idea, consonant with the Christian belief in the divine inspiration of the whole Bible, the Old and the New Testaments as they had them? The thesis advanced here is that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah used the current popularity of Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīh* as the occasion to promote an idea elaborated earlier by scholars in his own Jacobite community about the abrogation of Jewish law as a reasonable *sharī'ah* for the human community after the coming of the Messiah, whom they confessed to be Jesus of Nazareth.¹⁷ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah advanced this idea anew, and somewhat frantically, in the new circumstance of the seeming popularity of Ibn Kammūnah's book, itself a new and well-reasoned promotion of Judaism's claims to be the true religion.

By the thirteenth century, arguments between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the world of Islam about which was the true religion were already an old trope in intercommunal relations and, in the discourse of the *mutakallimūn*, they had become a discussion of prophecy and the signs of true prophecy (*dalā'il al-nubūwah*).¹⁸ Ibn Kammūnah seems in part, as we shall see, to have written his *Tanqīh* in the first place as a contribution to this discussion,¹⁹ and in particular to counter the influence among Christians and Muslims of an earlier work by a Jewish convert to Islam, Samaw'al al-Maghribī (d. 1174), whose book, *Ifḥām al-yahūd*, had achieved a wide circulation.²⁰ It was read by Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, who re-

fers explicitly to Samaw'al, and by many Muslims, who through the ages have continued to reproduce and comment on the *Iḥām*.²¹

In what follows, we shall first of all call attention to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's rebuttals of Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ*, and especially to his arguments in favor of the idea of the abrogation of the Mosaic *sharī'ah*. In the end we shall argue that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's notion of the abrogation of the Mosaic *sharī'ah* is an instance of the Islamicization of Christian apologetics, a development that has startled more than one modern reader of his marginal notes to Ibn Kammūnah's *Tanqīḥ*.

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's Characterization of Ibn Kammūnah and of the *Tanqīḥ*

From the very beginning, and throughout the *Ḥawāshī*, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah regularly refers to Ibn Kammūnah, seemingly not without polemical intent, as "the compiler" (*al-muṣannif*) of the *Tanqīḥ*. It seems likely that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah intends this appellation to reflect his not infrequent charge in the notes that in his book Ibn Kammūnah does not speak on his own authority or on the basis of reasoned arguments and references to the genuine scriptures. Rather, says Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, "the compiler" transmits from the rabbis, the Jewish 'ulamā', what he, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, calls the "reports of the Jews" (*akhbār al-yahūd*). At one place he speaks of Ibn Kammūnah's failure to reflect the teaching of the Torah and he says that the *sharī'ah* he espouses "is taken from the reports of the Jews, not from Moses."²² The point is most forcibly made in the following note that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah attaches to a passage in Ibn Kammūnah's reply to charges made by Samaw'al al-Maghribī in his *Iḥām al-yahūd*. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah writes, "It is likely that all or part of what the compiler mentions here is from the concoctions of the latter-day 'ulamā' of the Jews. It is impossible to credit them, especially when you know that the one on whose testimony we rely was one of their scribes in the past."²³

Here Ibn al-Maḥrūmah not only provides an insight into the background of his use of the title "the compiler" for Ibn Kammūnah, but he explicitly claims the insider, Jewish authority of the apostate Jew, Samaw'al al-Maghribī, whom he does not name here, but whom in his annotations he regularly calls "the objector" (*al-mu'tarifi*),²⁴ and on whose arguments in the *Iḥām al-yahūd* he often relies for the corroboration of his own observations. At several junctures, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah complains of what he calls Ibn Kammūnah's Jewish, "tribal bigotry (*al-ṭa'aṣṣub*) and craven

prejudice.”²⁵ Then, toward the end of his notes on Ibn Kammūnah’s chapter on Judaism, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, “What is clear from any number of the previous notes is the virulence of the compiler’s prejudice for the Jews by means of misrepresentations and fallacies.”²⁶ Throughout the notes Ibn al-Maḥrūmah complains of what he perceives to be Ibn Kammūnah’s lack of accuracy, his faulty readings, and the lack of soundness in his judgments, and in the conclusions he draws. For example, in connection with one passage in the *Tanqīh*, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, “I have examined this book from beginning to end and I have not found in it anything more worthless than this statement, or anything farther from the truth.”²⁷

At one point, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah compares what he agrees is the good quality of Ibn Kammūnah’s earlier works with the bad state of the *Tanqīh*. He says:

In this book, the compiler habitually makes bare claims and arbitrary judgments, at variance with his usual practice in his wise compositions, because he was following his reason. In this book he follows his passion, and so the outcome in connection with this book is bad, whereas the state of the other books was good. Obviously, his words here are insufficient to silence an adversary.²⁸

Perhaps it was due to his respect for Ibn Kammūnah’s scholarly works that at another point, in connection with one of the compiler’s arguments, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah makes the remark that “In my opinion, when the compiler set down these words, he was either drunk or the utmost of melancholy had come upon him.”²⁹ However this may be, it is clear that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s purpose is to undermine seriously Ibn Kammūnah’s credibility in the *Tanqīh*. He complains about his antipathy to Christians and his Jewish bias. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says that, nevertheless, “We, the community of the Christians, must ask God, exalted be He, to forgive what has come from this man about our truth and how coarsely he has treated us in this book of his.”³⁰

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah and the Abrogation of the Law of Moses

Amid the numerous matters that attracted Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s attention in his perusal of Ibn Kammūnah’s *Tanqīh*, two in particular stand out in terms of their importance for him: his concern to demonstrate, from

a Christian point of view, the abrogation of the *sharī'ah* of Moses; and his concern for the accurate statement of the doctrinal claims of the Christians, in particular the doctrines of the Trinity and the union (*al-ittiḥād*) of the divine and the human in the person of Jesus, the Messiah.

Each of the few scholars who have so far studied Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's *Ḥawāshī*, including the editor of the text, Ḥabīb Bacha,³¹ have noted with considerable surprise what they consider to be the author's anti-Torah stance—the thesis that in its present form the Torah is not of divine origin, but that it stems from the scribe Ezra's post-Exilic efforts at reconstruction of the lost original. The longest and most detailed of the *Ḥawāshī* are concerned with this issue.

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah approaches his argument in support of the thesis of the abrogation of Mosaic Law in several steps, as he follows Ibn Kammūnah's narrative in Chapter 2 of the *Tanqīḥ*, making comments as he goes. And his first comments simply have to do with pointing out what he takes to be inconsistencies in Ibn Kammūnah's readings of biblical texts, and the ingenuousness of his reasoning. But he soon comes to what he considers to be a major instance of that "arbitrary judgment" that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah often cites in his comments as one of "the compiler's" major failures. He claims that Ibn Kammūnah fails to be evenhanded in interpreting the books of the prophets in the same way as he interprets the Torah—especially those passages in the prophetic books that, according to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, abrogate provisions in the Torah. And he gives a number of examples.

The discussion of abrogation begins in earnest when Ibn al-Maḥrūmah reacts to Ibn Kammūnah's statement that Moses "brought the Israelites the holy Law but he did not abrogate the law that the nations had been commanded to observe since Adam and Noah."³² Ibn al-Maḥrūmah counters that in the Torah, Moses actually abrogated the Law of Adam and the Law of Noah, as well as the Law of Abraham.

For the most part, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's arguments consist of pointing out perceived inconsistencies and exceptions to Torah law in the biblical narratives. And, according to him, even one exception abrogates. But he also introduces other elements into the argument that will prove to be of considerable importance to him in the end. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, "There is no doubt about it; there is never in the Torah a single, genuinely noble trait of character. Rather, there is what would outwardly put one in mind of noble character traits, but inwardly it is a different matter. . . . The Torah incites to bad morals."³³

Furthermore, regarding the Judaism that Ibn Kammūnah presents as reasonable, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, “A religion that puts its faith in what is not in scripture goes outside of the jurisdiction of its lawgiver and it becomes objectionable from the point of view of law-giving.”³⁴ What is at issue here is the charge that adding to or subtracting from the law abrogates the law. And the issue is Ibn Kammūnah’s statement that “The Jews believe that the reward for obedience [to the law] is eternal happiness in paradise and the world to come.”³⁵ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah claims that in this matter, and a number of others he mentions, for the Jews, their law is “taken from the Jewish *‘ulamā’*, not from Moses. They follow neither Moses nor the Torah, but the rabbis.”³⁶

As for the Torah itself, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah argues that its abrogation as *sharī‘ah* is clear. He says, “When we require the Jews to abrogate even one of the Torah’s revealed precepts (*farīfiah sam‘iyyah*), the abrogation of their *sharī‘ah* stands definitively proved, for the whole is denied by reason of the denial of one of its parts.”³⁷ What is more, Moses himself was the one, according to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, who first abrogated one of the Torah’s revealed precepts. He cites from the book of Leviticus the prohibition of uncovering the nakedness of one’s brother’s wife and of marriage with her. And he says that Moses abrogated this earlier, revelatory prohibition in Deuteronomy, when he commends marriage with one’s brother’s childless widow.

After numerous further comments, keyed to passages in Ibn Kammūnah’s continuing line of reasoning, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah comes to the conclusion that his own observations confirm the truth of what the “objector” (*al-mu‘tarifi*), i.e., Samaw’al al-Maghribī, has said: “The Torah is Ezra’s book; it is not God’s book.”³⁸ Ezra has put it together in its currently incoherent and contradictory format on the basis of surviving shreds of memory of the traditions of the text that perished at the time of the Exile. So, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, “The Christians do not believe in the corruption (*al-taḥrīf*) of the Torah. Rather, they believe only in its abrogation (*al-naskh*).”³⁹ He says in corroboration of this point that this Christian position is in accord with what Samaw’al al-Maghribī had shown. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says, “What the opponent claimed is the making anew of the Torah after its passing away, not its corruption (*al-taḥrīf*), nor its alteration (*al-tabdīl*) while it still existed, according to the indication of the compiler’s language.”⁴⁰ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah goes on to report the convert to Islam, al-Maghribī’s view, that it was due to Ezra’s goodness and to his religiosity that he wanted to prevent his community from

following the ways of other peoples “until God would send a messenger who would establish the *sharī‘ah* anew for them, which would free them from this falsified book.”⁴¹ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s conclusion is that Ezra’s book is not God’s book.⁴²

On the face of it, as a number of modern scholars have said, it seems to be odd and unlikely that a Jacobite Christian in the fourteenth century in what was then northern Syria would be championing the view of the abrogation of the Mosaic *sharī‘ah*, even the Torah, as it was set forth in the Muslim convert Samaw’al al-Maghribī’s *Ifḥām al-yahūd*. By way of contrast, it had been the practice of earlier arabophone Christian thinkers, following in turn the practice of the Christian theologians of late antiquity, to accept the canonicity of the Torah and to upbraid the Jews for not perceiving what the Christians claimed to be the obvious Messianic import of the teaching of the Torah, as it applied to Jesus of Nazareth.⁴³ So, what has happened here, in the thinking of Ibn al-Maḥrūmah?

Some commentators have thought that in his *Ḥawāshī* Ibn al-Maḥrūmah was basically exploiting the work of al-Maghribī for its anti-Jewish potential and that his critique of Ibn Kammūnah’s *Tanqīḥ* was motivated by a desire to blunt the effectiveness of Ibn Kammūnah’s rebuttal of the challenges put forward in the *Ifḥām al-yahūd*. There can be no doubt that it was Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s intention to counter the well-put and effective reasoning of Ibn Kammūnah’s *Tanqīḥ*. Furthermore, it is clear that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah was responding particularly to the presentation of Judaism as the reasonably most plausible religion of the three, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. After all, he made no comments on either the first or the fourth chapters of the *Tanqīḥ*, on prophecy and on Islam respectively. But why, contrary to traditional, orthodox Christian views, did he mount an argument for the abrogation of the *sharī‘ah* of Moses as one would find it in the Torah as the Jews actually have it?

First of all, it is important to notice that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah does not reject the Torah as a canonical scripture in a sort of Marcionite way. Rather, he argues for the abrogation of the Torah as providing a now-valid *sharī‘ah*. To this end, he cites proof texts from what he regards as Ezra’s Torah, and from other prophetic books of the Hebrew scriptures that he regards as providing scriptural proof for the abrogation of the Torah as *sharī‘ah*. As we shall see, to make this point was not unique to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah among Christian apologists and polemicists, even prior to the appearance of al-Maghribī’s *Ifḥām al-yahūd*.

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah on the Doctrines of the Christians

It is interesting to note that in his *Ḥawāshī*, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah was much less interested in what Ibn Kammūnah had to say about the Christians than in what he had previously said about the Jews. In fact, at one point Ibn al-Maḥrūmah mentions that the medium of marginal notes provides too narrow a compass for speaking in detail about the Christian religion. So he says that he will content himself with indicating whether or not the polemicist against Christianity has spoken fairly or not. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah also makes a special point of saying, “I am not bound to please all the sects of the Christian religion, but I am bound to please Christians generally.”⁴⁴ In another note, after making a few remarks about Ibn Kammūnah’s discussion of some of the fine points of Christian theology, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says somewhat testily that it is not his concern to discuss the fine points beyond indicating the inadequacy of the polemicist’s remarks. He says he will content himself with mentioning for him “some volumes in the Arabic language, so that whoever wants to consult them might search them out and look into them.”⁴⁵ In fact, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah does mention two writers by name in his notes, one a Muslim, whom he calls “the erudite *imām*, Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī” (d. 1303), whose book, according to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, “was entitled, ‘The Commentary on the Divine Pages’ (*sharḥ al-ṣaḥāʾif al-ilālhiyyah*).”⁴⁶ The other writer, whom he mentions in passing, is his fellow Christian, the Jacobite, Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (893–974).⁴⁷ Otherwise, he occasionally refers to books in general, such as his remark in regard to one of Ibn Kammūnah’s comments about several Gospel passages that interpretations of their language are readily available in the commentaries (*fī l-tafāsīr*).⁴⁸

In the beginning of his account of the Christians in the third chapter of his *Tanqīḥ*, Ibn Kammūnah had provided a précis of their beliefs, a quick sketch of Christian history, and a review of the discrepancies in the four Gospels. He quoted the whole text of the creed of Nicea/Constantinople I, saying that he had gotten a copy of it from the Jacobites. He described the differences in the Christologies of the Jacobites, the Nestorians, and the Melkites, the three principal communities of Christians in his day.⁴⁹ He obviously had done his research carefully; in addition to mentioning that he had gotten a copy of the creed from the Jacobites, Ibn Maḥrūmah indicated that he had consulted the history books of the Christians.⁵⁰

What is interesting is that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah made no comment at all on this first section of the chapter. His first comment comes in connection with Ibn Kammūnah's claim that unlike his disciples, the Messiah had kept the precepts of the Torah. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah objected that in fact the Messiah had annulled the Sabbath, alleging that Ibn Kammūnah himself had previously mentioned this very fact.⁵¹ And in the sequel, albeit that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah does comment on Ibn Kammūnah's discussion of the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, as we shall see, he is more concerned with pointing out what he considers to be Ibn Kammūnah's misrepresentation of Jewish texts and with objecting to Jewish interpretations of scriptural passages than he is concerned to correct the Jewish scholar's views of Christian doctrines. However, he does in a number of passages complain about what he charges are Ibn Kammūnah's misquotations from the Gospels. He says in one place in this connection that, "a lie on the part of one like this virtuous man is the utmost of the ugly."⁵²

Ibn Kammūnah did raise some questions about how unsuccessful the Christian *mutakallimūn* had been, in his opinion, in their use of the terms of the discussion of the divine attributes on the part of contemporary Muslim *mutakallimūn* to defend the credibility of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In particular, he argued that the Christian apologetic effort to present the doctrine of the three "persons" or "individual identities" (*aqānīm*) of the one God in terms of the essential "attributes of God" (*ṣifāt Allāh*) was not sufficient, in his opinion, to support adequately the Christian profession of belief in one God (*al-tawḥīd*). He says that it would behoove the adversaries of the Christians to say:

If the hypostases (*al-aqānīm*) you mentioned suggest three entities (*dhawāt*) existing independently, it invalidates the proof of "one-ness" (*burhān al-waḥdāniyyah*), and it also contradicts your belief in *al-tawḥīd*. But if you mean that the hypostases are attributes, or that one of them is essence (*dhātun*), and the other two are attributes, then have you not turned the attribute of power (*al-qudrah*) into a fourth hypostasis, and the same with the rest of [the attributes] by means of which God is described, exalted be He? If they say, "His power is His knowledge," then we say, "so too is His life His knowledge, so why do you single it out as an hypostasis?"⁵³

Ibn Kammūnah's objection here is a clever one, based as it is on the differences between the Christian and the Muslim *mutakallimūn* about which are the divine attributes of essence, and which are the attributes

of action, a distinction common to both communities of scholars. But Ibn al-Maḥrūmah does not seem too interested in the matter. He contents himself in his note on the first part of this passage with saying that Ibn Kammūnah had gotten what the Christians intended right, and he remarks that Ibn Kammūnah had earlier noted that the Christians all “agreed that the hypostasis of the Father is the [divine] essence.”⁵⁴ And he moves on to complain that ordinary people would probably be satisfied with Ibn Kammūnah’s answers to objections without noticing their inadequacy. And then in his next note Ibn al-Maḥrūmah proceeds to take issue with Ibn Kammūnah’s remark about making the attribute of power a hypostasis, and the rest of the attributes as well, on the model of the attribute of “life.” Ibn al-Maḥrūmah points out that there is no parity between “life” and “power,” because the latter implies a dependence on something created. He says, “Do you not see that our saying, ‘God is alive (*Allāh ḥayy*)’ speaks the truth that [He is so] eternally, forever, without a connection with any created thing? [To say], ‘God is powerful (*Allāh qādir*)’ is not the same thing, due to the ‘attribute of power’s (*ṣifat al-qudrah*)’ need for the existence of that for which it is empowered. Consider the rest in the same way.”⁵⁵

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s attention was then attracted to what Ibn Kammūnah had to say about the “union” (*al-ittiḥād*) between divinity and humanity that Christians confess to be present in the person of Jesus, as expressed in the apostle Peter’s answer to Jesus’s question, to his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:15). Almost thirty of the forty-five marginal comments Ibn al-Maḥrūmah makes on the text of Ibn Kammūnah’s chapter in the *Tanqīḥ* on the belief of the Christians have to do with this topic. And in the course of his comments, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah makes frequent mention of his conviction that in his polemic, Ibn Kammūnah was motivated by a Jewish antipathy toward and a hatred for Christians.

Ibn Kammūnah’s first objection to the doctrine of the “union” is that “union” as such is impossible; there is either one thing or two things, or a third thing, he says. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah writes in the margin that Christians agree with this statement as far as it goes, but without going into the matter any further at this point he says that in the end the premise is not sound and he says that it was the aforementioned Muslim thinker, Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, who had pointed out the fallacy.⁵⁶ What is more, he says in another note, the Christians do not espouse a doc-

trine of the mixing or blending of divinity and humanity in Christ, as Ibn Kammūnah suggested.⁵⁷

At another point, Ibn Kammūnah cites Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's Trinitarian formula,⁵⁸ seemingly with approval, but charging that in their creedal formulae regarding the "union," the Jacobites, Nestorians, and Melkites effectively contradict it.⁵⁹ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah notes the quotation from Ibn ʿAdī with satisfaction and goes on to reprove Ibn Kammūnah for not allowing Christians the same latitude he allows his fellow Jews in interpreting metaphorically biblical passages that seemingly attribute corporality to God. In fact, says Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, the Christians, with their doctrine of the Incarnation, have a more satisfactory way of dealing with the seeming anthropomorphism of biblical language than do the Jews. Then in what seems like a good measure of testiness, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says that he will not bother to answer all the petty objections of the polemicists about doctrinal formulae of the several denominations of Christians, since there are a number of volumes in Arabic that they might readily consult on these very matters. He says that he will mention them at appropriate points, but in fact he fails to do so in the remaining notes.⁶⁰

At various junctures, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah complains about what he regards as Ibn Kammūnah's misquotations and misinterpretations of Gospel passages. And when Ibn Kammūnah argues that none of the signs of the coming of the Messiah mentioned in the books of the ancient prophets came to pass in Jesus's time,⁶¹ Ibn al-Maḥrūmah says in his comment on the passage that Ibn Kammūnah thought this was an argument in favor of the Jews against the Christians, but in fact, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah avers, it is one of the most decisive arguments in favor of the Christians against the Jews. For, according to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, the expectation of the Jews of his time was that the Messiah would come in the next generation, and our author points out that no more and no less of the signs of the Messianic coming were in evidence in his time than in the time of Jesus, and what is more, the expectation of the Jews contradicts the requirements of the only reasonable interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel, if one was not going to accept the Christian interpretation according to which the prophecy refers to the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

To make his case, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah evokes the prediction of the coming of the Messiah found in the book of Daniel, where it is said, according to our author, that "after seventy weeks of years the Messiah would come."⁶² Ibn al-Maḥrūmah reasons that the text must be referring to more

than seventy years, a point now long passed, so it must be referring to 700 years, and seven times 700 is 4900, but according to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah, in his time (c. 1333–40) approximately 2000 years had already elapsed since the time of Daniel, so the Jews should look for their Messiah some 4700 years from “our time.” But in fact, he says, the Jews are expecting the coming of the Messiah “in the generation following the generation in which we are,”⁶³ which would be less than thirty years hence and before the year 770 AH, which would be 1368 CE. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah seems to take it for granted that this position is absurd, and so he suggests that the arguments of Ibn Kammūnah about the lack of “signs” in Jesus’s day lack any persuasive potential.

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah goes on to say that the Christians actually have a very convincing argument against the Jews in another passage from the book of Daniel, which our author quotes as follows: “The Messiah will be killed and the Holy City will become a ruin afterwards because of his killing.”⁶⁴ And he goes on to say, “It is well known that the Messiah was killed more than thirteen hundred years ago, and *al-Quds* was destroyed shortly after that, and it is a ruin up to now.”⁶⁵ Regarding the miracles of Jesus, Ibn Kammūnah had suggested that the reports of them rested on the testimony of individuals that did not amount to a reliable chain of transmission and one could readily understand the reports to be the result of trickery and collusion.

Tatmīm Is Not Naqfi

In the last annotations that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah made in the margins of Ibn Kammūnah’s text, it becomes clear that the Christian polemicist’s claim regarding the abrogation (*al-naskh*) of the Mosaic *sharī‘ah* did not entail the “rejection” (*naqfi*) of the Torah. Rather, he argued, because the Torah was lacking, Christ fulfilled what is lacking. Ibn al-Maḥrūmah put it this way:

There is no doubt about the Torah’s lack. There is no fasting in it, nor any prayer; there is no abiding of souls after death, no rising, nor ultimate recompense, no heaven and no hell. The Lord Messiah brought it to fulfillment by bringing up these and similar things. It is clear that this is a fulfillment and not rejection.⁶⁶

Ibn al-Maḥrūmah goes on to explain that it is like a man who builds on top of a wall; he does not demolish the wall, but he brings it to comple-

tion and he says that this is what Christ meant when he said, "I did not come to demolish the Torah but to fulfill it" (see Matt. 5:17). In earlier notes on Ibn Kammūnah's chapter on Judaism, he had shown to his own satisfaction that his opponent had not successfully defended the presence in the Torah of the matters that Ibn al-Maḥrūmah now says were lacking in it. And he goes on in the present note to explain how Christ's abrogation of earlier prescriptions of the Mosaic *sharī'ah* actually provided for the lack in the Torah and in doing so he fulfilled the ultimate purpose of the Mosaic Law.

Conclusion: Jews, Christians, Muslims, and the *Sharī'ah*

The determining factor in the background of Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's argument in behalf of the abrogation the Mosaic *sharī'ah* seems to have been the basically Islamic idea of the later prophetic abrogation (*al-naskh*) of earlier prophetic ordinances regarding human conduct.⁶⁷ It is a theme that had emerged already in early Muslim polemic against the Jews, especially among the Mu'tazilah. The earliest text in which the charge is voiced seems to have been written by the early Mu'tazilī *mutakallim* al-Nazzām (d. 846), arguing against an otherwise unknown Jewish opponent named Manassā ibn Ṣāliḥ, in which al-Nazzām defends the idea of the abrogation of the Torah subsequent to the coming of the Qur'ān.⁶⁸ Eventually the allegation became such a commonplace in both Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī anti-Jewish polemics⁶⁹ that both Sa'adiyah Gaon ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (882–942) and Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Qirqisānī (fl. c. 937), to name only the major figures in the early Jewish apologetic literature in Arabic, devoted considerable attention to refuting the charge of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law in the apologetic sections of their own philosophical works.⁷⁰ Christians seem to have come only later to embrace the Islamic idea of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law.

As the Islamic legal system grew into maturity in early Abbasid times, the general term *sharī'ah* came to mean the ensemble of "the rules and regulations governing the lives of Muslims, derived in principal from the Qur'ān and ḥadīth." As such, Muslim scholars used the term to designate "the message of a particular prophet," and in a general way to mean "the totality of a prophetic religion."⁷¹ This latter sense of the term entered the general parlance of the Arabic-speaking peoples, and so it is no surprise that among Arabic-speaking Jews, "the most commonly used term for translating Hebrew *torah* is Arabic *sharī'a*. . . . It is thus the most

common word expressing rule and system of rules in Saʿadiah’s Arabic version of the Hebrew Bible.⁷²

The Islamic concept of *sharīʿah* involved the accompanying concept of abrogation (*al-naskh*), whereby the lawgiver, i.e., God, might later abrogate (replace) an earlier ruling. While the theoretical elaboration of this concept became quite complicated, insofar as it was based on passages in the Qurʾān (e.g., in *al-Baqarah* and *al-Nahl*, Q. 2:106 and 16:101), in legal thought the replacement of one ruling by another did not necessarily entail the removal of the text of the earlier ruling from the scripture, i.e., the Qurʾān.⁷³ But, as we have seen, in Islamic thought the coming of the Qurʾān did entail the abrogation of the *sharīʿah* of Moses. And so in Jewish–Muslim interreligious controversy the topic of abrogation early on became an issue between the two communities. One reason why it did not come up so readily in Christian–Muslim controversy is probably that law itself, or orthopraxis, did not have such a high profile among Christians as did orthodoxy. But as the concept of *sharīʿah* came eventually in Islamic thought to stand for “the totality of a prophetic religion,” as Norman Calder put it in the passage quoted above, it was inevitable that the term would come to stand for religion itself and thus to figure in discussions of the criteria for recognizing true prophecy and the true religion, an ongoing topic of controversy among the *mutakallimūn* of the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims alike.

This being the case, one may wonder if Ibn al-Maḥrūmah did not also follow the view of Muslim jurists, according to whom the abrogation in question involved the replacement of the Mosaic *sharīʿah*’s rulings, but not the rejection of the text of the Torah in which the rulings appeared. For Ibn al-Maḥrūmah made it clear that Christians do not believe in the corruption (*tahrīf*) of the Torah in hand, albeit that he claimed it is the text of Ezra and not of Moses, but they do believe in its abrogation (*al-naskh*), all the while accepting the text in their canon of inspired scripture, reading it in their liturgies, and in their studies finding in the books of Moses many of the scriptural typologies in terms of which they depicted the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Furthermore, a distinct feature of Christian apologetics and polemics in the world of Islam has consistently been to map the structure and the terms of their *kalām* on developments in Islamic thought. I suggest that this is precisely what was going on in Ibn al-Maḥrūmah’s *Ḥawāshī* on Ibn Kammūnah’s *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth*. Following developments in Islamic legal theory, Ibn Kammūnah pushed the concept of the abrogation of the

Mosaic *sharī'ah* to its limits. Given the use of the term in the Islamic milieu to mean religion itself, the argument for the abrogation of the *sharī'ah* necessarily also entailed, in Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's view, the rejection of Judaism's claim to be the religion according to which God wills to be worshipped, i.e., the true religion, the very point that Ibn Kammūnah sought to prove in his *Tanqīh*.

3 Al-Biqāʿī Seen through Reuchlin

REFLECTIONS ON THE ISLAMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BIBLE

Walid Saleh

I have been trying for some time to articulate the differences between the story of Johannes Reuchlin (d. 1522) and the Hebrew Bible and al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), a fifteenth-century Mamlūk scholar, and his own encounter with the Bible.¹ It is what I will call “the difference of emotionality” of the two stories that I have found most deeply illuminating, and also most elusive to characterize. I have come to believe that a serious problem in studies of Jewish–Muslim relations is the lack of attention to the emotionality of this relationship, the evocative discourse of this encounter. My encounter with Reuchlin came from reading the recent book by David Price, *Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books*.² The book is the summation of a long engagement with Reuchlin on the part of Price; it is also resting on a mountain of scholarship on Reuchlin, who was the most important humanist Hebraist and the man responsible for introducing the academic study of Hebrew language into the universities of Europe. Reuchlin was pivotal in the debates that led to the triumph of the humanist program, and now scholars are seeing in him also a prelude to the Reformation. The similarities between Reuchlin’s activities and those of al-Biqāʿī are striking, yet given their radically different cultural settings, a formal comparison of the two men might easily seem arbitrary and therefore potentially fruitless. Encountering Reuchlin has nevertheless allowed me to ask questions about al-Biqāʿī that I would not have thought of asking or even considered necessary to answer. It is my aim in this paper to present some of these reflections and to explore some of the questions that my reading of Reuchlin has raised for me about al-Biqāʿī, most important among which is the following: How can we better understand the general *indifference* to the Bible among Mus-

lim exegetes, an indifference for which al-Biqā'ī presents one of the most notable exceptions?

The most striking difference between the controversies in which Reuchlin and al-Biqā'ī were involved is how pivotal Reuchlin's defense and advocacy of Hebrew proved to be and how determinative of the whole fate of Christian scholarship on the Bible, on the one hand, and how inconsequential was al-Biqā'ī's controversy to the general history of Islamic intellectual developments regarding the Bible (I shall have to qualify this claim later). But it is not the substance of the affair that interests me, so much as the emotions and the passions that were evident in Reuchlin's controversy. To read the unfolding of events around Reuchlin is to be in the midst of a swirl of emotions. One feels one is at Oberammergau watching a Passion Play about the Hebrew language, a kind of a mirror image of the traditional Passion at Golgotha: Jewish books (and by extension Jewish religious life itself, as Reuchlin argued) were to be sacrificed. Price actually characterizes the historical moment in the early sixteenth century that Jews found themselves in as the most serious crisis in European Jewry before the Holocaust. The passions and emotions that "Christianity's Jewish problem" evoked in Europe make me ask about what sort of emotions were engendered when medieval Islamic society contemplated the Jewish religion. What was the evocative power of Judaism in the Islamic imagination?

For an example of what I am trying to convey, one only need to look at a classic work like Mark Cohen's *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*. Cohen, summarily and emphatically, issues his judgment at the beginning of the book: that Jewish life was lived more securely in the medieval Arab-Islamic world than under Christendom.³ Yet, nowhere in the book is the issue of the *emotions* that anti-Semitism evoked explicitly discussed as a major difference between Jewish life in medieval Islamic lands and Jewish life in Europe. Cohen discusses the legal position of the Jews in both environments, the economic factors, social hierarchy, marginality, and ethnicity; the Jews in towns and villages, and the notion of sociability, polemics, and persecution. There is no discussion of art and music, poetry and painting, drama, and sermon literature, all the loci of emotions about the Jews. In many ways this absence in Cohen's book is understandable, for, outside of a limited corpus of polemical literature, there is no Jewish presence in these media in medieval Islam. Yet, it is the evocative power of Jewishness in a non-Jewish audience that

is, I believe, of the essence if we are to understand the difference and similarities of the two experiences. That Muslims did not have paintings like Matthias Grünewald's *The Mocking of Christ* does not mean that medieval Muslim culture did not exhibit extreme emotions about Jews just as Christians did, albeit in other forms. The task of unearthing such material is not easy, and I would argue that a new scholarly sensibility is needed if such painstaking research is to bear fruit. Emotions or absence thereof are, I am arguing, central in giving a clearer picture of the Islamic imagination of Judaism.

Approached from this angle, indifference thus becomes a topic to be analyzed. The absence or presence of an emotion-evoking Judaism is significant. If the Jews in medieval Islamic lands "had it better" (and I actually think that such statements are very problematic), it is in many ways due to their insignificance as a source of emotionality to the medieval Islamic imagination. They were not enmeshed in the same web of symbols, images, metaphors, and public propaganda centered on evoking emotional responses from the public medieval Muslim audience, despite the prominent presence of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the Qurʾān and in ḥadīth.

The insight, if one could call it such, that indifference and absence is as significant as presence and engagement, is not what I have expected to come from my inquiry into al-Biqāʿī. I would like to argue that we have to take seriously what we have so far presumed to be a shortcoming on the part of the dominant Islamic culture (in this case its indifference to the scripture of other minorities), if we want to assess the restraining effects of this indifference on the dominant culture itself.

In what ways did taboos about the Jews circumscribe the Muslims themselves and unexpectedly allow the Jews—and in the case of al-Biqāʿī that interests me, the Hebrew Bible—to exist in a realm of safety apart from the prying eyes of inquisitive Muslims? Medieval Islamic culture, with its general lack of interest in the scriptures of its minorities, their languages and beliefs, was unwittingly establishing a situation that cut off the oxygen to any mythologizing narratives of hatred that may have otherwise flourished, either with more acquired knowledge of these minorities or more interest in imagining their beliefs and practices. It is not that anti-Jewish emotions were lacking; they were operative in other domains of writing, especially polemical literature. It is that such emotions did not lead to more detailed knowledge of or curiosity about other religions. In the case of scriptures, Muslims on the one hand proscribed the

teaching of the Qurʾān to non-Muslims. Familiarity would have bred contempt, as it sometimes did in Christian contexts, and non-Muslim boys ought not to brazenly pursue knowledge about Islam's scripture.⁴

On the other hand, Muslims also informally proscribed to themselves the reading of the scriptures of other religions. There was, it seems, a sort of anxiety provoked by such foreign scriptures, a fear that familiarity might lead to suspicion of one's own religion, or that simply recognizing such scriptures *as scriptures* and reading them in such a light might undermine one's own faith. But in official terms, *sharīʿah* law (religious law based on the Qurʾān) was very clear here: When legal scholars came to debate whether Muslims could read and use scriptures of Jews and Christians, the majority seemed to allow it, and this is evident from the fact that al-Biqā'ī had the whole religious establishment of Cairo and Damascus behind him on this issue. When the matter was probed in academic disputes, it appears that Muslims indeed could permissibly read the Hebrew Bible. But in reality, as a rule, they would not and did not. The permissive legal opinion on this matter came to matter little in the face of an emotion, horror of contamination, the fear of impurity that was engendered by these Jewish texts. These powerful emotions were actually the guide of the savants of the *sharīʿah* on this issue.⁵

I became interested in al-Biqā'ī, eventually editing his work, precisely because he was interested in the Jewish Bible, and his interest was no neutral affair; it evoked an emotional response from him. A rather austere, puritanical soul, al-Biqā'ī literately fell in love with the Bible, the Jewish Bible. He developed an appreciation of it that was unusual and unmatched in the history of Islamic interactions with the Hebrew Bible. Reuchlin's later defense of Hebrew and the Jews would invoke the use of the word miracle—it was, as his contemporary Rabbi Josel of Rosheim deemed it, “a miracle inside a miracle”;⁶ similarly, al-Biqā'ī's love for the Hebrew Bible was, if not miraculous, still nothing if not astounding. He apparently would tear up when he read Jeremiah, he felt his heart torn, his liver crushed from the sorrow and pathos that the style of Jeremiah evoked in him. He has a soft spot for the Psalms, and used the book in remarkably sensitive ways to convey to the Muslim reader the sorrow and tribulations of the Jews during the destruction of the First Temple. He not only defended the sanctity of the Hebrew Bible but—here is the rub—he used it extensively to explain the biblical material in the Qurʾān.⁷ He reversed centuries of scholarly customs, of using internal Islamic biblical lore—a lore that had its origins in Jewish and Christian lore but had very soon

detached itself from these sources to become fully autochthonous and insular. Such was my delight that I actually was incredulous at first. It is as if a modern liberal sensitive soul made a wish and it came true! Why and how was it possible?

Beneath my initial excitement at discovering al-Biqā'ī lay a fallacy, a fallacy that I was all too happy not to analyze or, for that matter, even to recognize. My initial assumptions were that to know is to tolerate, to know is better than not knowing, to encounter is better than not to meet, and to experience is better than not to experience. Beneath this lay another assumption: that somehow Islam could have become more tolerant of its minorities if it just tried harder and got to know them better, for they were, after all, close at hand. It is this assumption that I find now extremely misguided, if not a romantic delusion that distorts historical analysis. Mine was, at first, a muddled approach, since I was assessing the encounter of al-Biqā'ī by my own liberal attitudes to cross-cultural encounters. Careful as I was in my analysis, sticking to the facts and the reconstruction of the details of al-Biqā'ī's encounter with the Bible, I was groping for a way to assess the significance of this encounter that did justice to the breadth and complexity of the history of Islam's engagement with the Bible more generally. Clearly, I thought to myself, this was a model, though tentative or exploratory, of how things could have been better.

Yet, I had a nagging feeling that this was too facile an understanding, too unfounded an explanation of the facts. I thus opted for careful statements declaring that an assessment of al-Biqā'ī's legacy was too premature, and I warned about jumping to any hasty conclusion. I was eager not to see in al-Biqā'ī a Muslim example of liberal tolerance, since I warned that the author hardly cared about Jews as such. He was merely concerned with the Hebrew Bible. Yet, despite my careful treading there was no denying the fact that this encounter could teach us something about how Islamic religious tradition reacted across the centuries to the Bible. What exactly that lesson was I was not sure at first. I was all too grateful merely to state the facts, and leave historical analysis until such time as I had a clearer picture of what I understood to be the significance of this encounter.

Despite the permissive legal opinions, some opponents of al-Biqā'ī did see in his liberal use of the Hebrew Bible to interpret the Qur'ān a breach of Islamic tradition and they were adamant that the very handling of such material was prohibited. These opponents were not only scandalized at his daring to quote the texts, but they questioned the very permissibility

of reading these scriptures. It is this parochialism that I now, all things considered, recognize as a kind of virtue. This deep-seated fear of the scripture of others was a necessary restraint on the dominant culture that allowed those who read the Bible to do so more or less in a modality unchecked by outsiders. In this sense as historians we ought to recognize the negative emotional response to an artifact of a minority—the Bible—as a possible cause for leaving that artifact untouched in the hands of that minority—Jews or Christians. What protected the Bible was precisely the emotion it engendered in the majority, a fear of its power, since a clear statement about its status seemed beyond the reach of law. It was divine and it was corrupt at the same time, and it was easier not to confront the meaning of this paradoxical position.

The medieval dominant cultures of Islam and Christianity were both based on strict notions of hierarchy and a clear sense of their own superiority. The language of tolerance of the other was one mired in contempt and despising: One actually expected signs of humiliation to be exhibited and shown as a palpable means of expressing and affirming commonly accepted social hierarchies. To expect from such a situation the development of a tolerance born out of knowledge is utterly misguided, for who could really guarantee to the minority the right to their own artifacts if they became objects of fascination and even admiration on the part of the majority?

The historical possibilities of how medieval Islamic culture could have related to the Bible are fascinating to contemplate, since almost every scenario could have come about: from that of total appropriation to total animosity. The historical record is however clear. Despite the long history of engagement with the Bible, Muslims kept it at a distance. It never became part of their scripture; though they claimed to honor it as such, it never became part of their legal sources, although clearly they had recourse to it. (For example, the Muslim penalty of stoning for adultery is clearly biblical and not Qur'ānic in origin.) Eager as they were to acquire the wisdom of others—their appropriation of Greek philosophy is a clear example that they had the resources to appropriate what they wished should they care to—they never made a serious effort to adopt Jewish wisdom apart from the Jewish lore that was absorbed early on in Islamic religious history (such lore was known as *Isrā'īliyyāt*). For a religion that claimed to inherit and bring to perfection Judaism and Christianity, this is a rather unexpected resolution. By claiming inheritance, Islam made it impossible to access the two, urging instead a complete disconnection

with the past. It is a situation not unlike the great transformation that was brought about by Hellenism, which caused a demise of the old Mesopotamian cultures or the fate of Pharaonic culture with the introduction of Christianity to Egypt. It is not Marcion, but then it is not the position of early Christianity either. It is not as if Muslims were not eager to know all the details about King David or Job, but somehow the access to these stories began and ended with the Qurʾān and the Islamiized Jewish lore.⁸ Only Muslim polemicists and historians encountered the Bible, and here the Islamic tradition is not wanting for a rather astounding degree of engagement with the Bible. Yet, the Bible was kept out of a systematic structure of scholarship. It was never part of any curriculum or had a place in any systematic theological analysis. Far more significantly, refutations of the Bible never made it into theological summaries.⁹

The question then is: Why this headlong retreat from the Bible? I think there are several reasons that made this likely, perhaps even logically necessary. The first is the peripheral location where the founding moment of Islam occurred: There was no equivalent of Alexandria in Arabia where an Arabic Bible could have been habituated in Arabic before Islam spread, as happened with the Septuagint. Islam did not “grow out of” Christianity or of Judaism and as such the scriptures of these two religions were not envisioned as essential, despite all the organic connection to the two and despite the self-understanding that Muḥammad had of himself as a prophetic figure in the Jewish tradition. The “nationalist” (Arabian) nature of the career of Muḥammad was also a major cause for this situation. Muḥammad was eager to make central the Arabic nature of his revelation, the fact the Qurʾān was an Abrahamic revelation to the Arabs in Arabic, the last remaining pagans (at least as Muḥammad understood the Arab predicament of his time). There was a certain eagerness to be treated as equal, not as superior, hence the frequent repetitions of the creedal formula in the Qurʾān (e.g., Q. 2:136), “We believe in . . . what has been revealed to us . . . and what was given to all other Prophets from their Lord,” with the clarification that Muslims make “no distinction” between God’s messengers (an injunction that was shed very quickly, for Muslims discovered that even if they did not make distinctions, God apparently did, and he sided with Muḥammad). The spectacular success of the early Muslim conquests still clouds our understanding of early Islam; Islam was in fact much humbler than we allow. Muḥammad accorded the books of early religions a divine status (although the Qurʾān attempted

to qualify such divinity later on), and each nation was seen to be given a book in its own language containing the same message. Muḥammad, one surmises, would have been happy to have the Arabs to himself to save; one is not sure he could have envisioned the postconquest situation. Thus there was no sense of a cumulative scriptural inheritance, and the very nationalist nature of the mission (and I mean here linguistic nationalism) was a barrier that could not be traversed.

If these were internal conditions that made the Islamic religion both culturally and religiously able to define itself without the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity, there was a later cultural development that would seal the fate of this situation, the discovery of Arabic philology.¹⁰ This momentous cultural achievement, the likes of which was never seen in the Ancient Semitic Near East, meant that any attempt at appropriation had to contend with a radical philosophy of original languages. That is, the Arabs by making a hermeneutical claim for truth that is based on philology and on the original language of revelation, made any appropriation of an Arabic Bible impossible. The Bible was not revealed in Arabic for the Arabs to understand. The fact that the Jews in Arab lands were trilingual, possessors of and guardians of the Hebrew language, made a confrontation with them a losing game. There was no paradigm for learning Hebrew in scholastic Islam to equip Muslims for overtaking the Jews on this front, and there never would be. Muslims always negotiated their relationship with the Bible through a Jewish gate; the custodians were the Jews, the language was Judeo-Arabic, and with a scoff a Jew could dismiss the cleverest polemical argument by the original language trump card. Whether that argument was made or not is not the issue; the Arabs knew all too well that it could be made.

Finally, what is this Bible that I wanted to talk about then? My topic so far has been about how the Bible was experienced or treated by Islamic culture. The history of the Bible in Islam is mostly the story of the Bible in Arabic, an Arabic Bible that was translated by Jews or Christians, which invariably was accessible to Muslim scholars who were curious enough to want to read it. Yet I have come to realize that this is hardly the story of the Bible in Muslim lands. The other half of the story is actually far more fascinating, far more transformative of our common cultural history, but it is a story that is never told in conjunction with the Arabic Bible. It is the story of the Hebrew Bible itself, now experienced by Jews themselves through the same philological revolution that allowed Semitic-speaking people of the Middle East to have an analytical tool of

their language that is still the basis of our understanding of these languages. The Arabic philological revolution was an epochal moment in the cultural history of the Mediterranean world. Among its many achievements, it allowed Arabs, Jews, and Syriac-speaking Christians a unified realm of discourse that was at the root of the cultural connectivity that the minorities experienced. The Arabs did not care to learn Hebrew, but the Jews not only learned Arabic, but transferred Arabic philological theory to Hebrew, which was a perfect fit there, given the fact that both are Semitic languages. The Hebrew Bible after this revolution was experienced differently within Rabbinic Judaism: The Hebrew Bible was now “philologized,” for lack of a better word, transferred from the realm of midrash to the realm of philology. The very philological sophistication of the Arabs, which crippled them from claiming a sovereignty over a scripture in a foreign language, was allowing the Jews, equipped with the same philological tools, to reconfigure their own experience of their own scripture on their own terms. This reconfiguration of the Hebrew Bible in a philological mold transformed Rabbinic Judaism, and the effects of this transformation are still visible today.

Counting the many blessings that he believes God has bestowed on the Jews, al-Biqā‘ī ends up experiencing their salvation through Islamic terms. It is not the exodus from Egypt, the parting of the sea, the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, but actually the Torah’s preservation uncorrupted in their hands that is the sign of God’s favor. The preservation of the Qur’ān through the ages was one of the miracles that Muslims presumed to be a prerogative only granted to them by God. Al-Biqā‘ī was clearly convinced that the Torah was similarly preserved.

I ought now to lay my cards on the table, for my argument is calling into question the very merit of Reuchlin’s open embrace of Hebrew. For though Reuchlin was a miracle inside a miracle, his heirs were not. The small window of opportunity that was open to Jewish converts to act as teachers of Hebrew was closing ever so tight. Soon Hebrew was habituated in a Christian environment, and the rabbis or Jewish converts were not needed to teach Christians of *Hebraica Veritas*. Learning Hebrew did not mean an openness to Jews, an entertaining of their claims, or a toleration of their interpretation of their own scripture. Indeed, it meant the very opposite. The more Europe knew, the more the Jews would suffer.

Who was benefiting from this cultural exchange in the long run? Our assumptions about cultural exchanges are caught in Enlightenment as-

sumptions about the supremacy of knowing about others as a precondition for understanding them and where understanding is equated with tolerance. The problem with these assumptions is that they are not borne out by historical processes. We have to reassess cultural exchanges in political contexts, not independently of them. As custodians of knowledge we should never fail to praise knowledge, but as historians we ought to assess historical realities. There is something about imperial settings that allows minorities an independence nourished by the cultural indifference from the majority culture that is now impossible to appreciate in a nation-state context. In the case of medieval Islam, ignorance was a protective barrier that allowed Jews a monopoly over their religious lives, a monopoly that only continued to be possible because Muslims could not penetrate it and did not wish to understand it.

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PART II

Dominicans and Their Disputations

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4 Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian Thought on Islam

Thomas E. Burman

To begin, if I may, with the essentials. This essay is about four things: a pair of thirteenth-century scholars of Islam, the lost archetype of a sixteenth-century manuscript now in Paris, the relationships between that lost manuscript and those scholars, and what all this can tell us about the medieval Latin-Christian engagement with Islam. The two scholars are the Dominican missionary-linguists, Ramon Martí (d. c. 1284) and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320) who—along with the sui generis layman, Ramon Lull—were the most important Latin interpreters of Islam in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Both friars wrote treatises against Islam that, at least superficially, were much alike. Their destinies certainly were not. Martí's *De seta Machometi* (*On the Sect of Muḥammad*)—the fruit of broad study of Qurʾān, Qurʾānic commentary, the biography of the Prophet, and ḥadīth—survives in only a handful of manuscripts, while Riccoldo's *Contra legem sarracenorūm* (*Against the Law of the Saracens*), based in part, it is true, on nearly obsessive reading of the Qurʾān in Arabic, but otherwise only on Latin sources, became a best seller, available today in more than thirty medieval manuscripts, translations into Castilian and Greek, a Latin back-translation of the Greek, and early printed editions.

The lost manuscript was the ancestor of a Paris manuscript, BnF MS lat. 3394, copied in Italy in the sixteenth century, which contains three works that, while we are not surprised to find them together in the same codex, never appear side by side in any other manuscript. The bulk of it consists of one of the six known copies of Mark of Toledo's early thirteenth-century Latin translation of the Qurʾān, the *Liber Alchorani*.¹ Following that we find a singularly important—if scarcely read—text, the Latin version of a Christian polemical treatise against Islam known as the *Liber*

denudationis siue ostensionis aut patefaciens (*Book of Denuding or Exposing, or the Discloser*).² Composed in Arabic somewhere in al-Andalus in the eleventh century, this work survives only in the Latin version preserved in this manuscript. The last few folios of the codex contain the well-known fifth chapter of Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* (*Dialogue against the Jews*), which refutes Islam.³

The relationships between the two Dominicans and the lost archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394 are complicated, even convoluted. Yet pondering them helps us understand not only the origins and character of Martí's and Riccoldo's very different ways of engaging with Islamic texts, but also a key feature of the late-medieval Latin way of thinking about Islam—its intriguing Qur'āno-centrism, its zealous confrontation with Islam's holy book to the exclusion of all other Islamic books, an approach which, while perhaps practically necessary, was not the only one available in thirteenth-century Latin Christendom.⁴

That lost archetype of the Parisian manuscript connects us backward to the Iberian sources of Latin-Christian knowledge about Islam and forward to the Italian Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's widely read *Against the Law of the Saracens* of about 1300. For two of the three most important sources of Riccoldo's widely read treatise are the two main works in this anthology—Mark of Toledo's Qur'ān translation and *The Book of Denuding*, both products of Spain. Indeed, it is probable, as Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny suggested many years ago, that the archetype of this manuscript was brought from Spain to Italy where it circulated among the Dominican friars. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, she asserted, "studied it without doubt in Florence."⁵ She believed this not only because Riccoldo had clearly read the *Book of Denuding* and borrowed extensively from it in his *Against the Law of the Saracens*, but also because Riccoldo was familiar with Chapter 5 of Alfonsi's dialogues, the last element of the manuscript. What she did not know is that Riccoldo also had an intimate knowledge of Mark of Toledo's Qur'ān translation. We cannot go too far wrong, then, in assuming that Riccoldo had a manuscript containing Mark's translation, the *Book of Denuding*, and Alfonsi's fifth chapter—the lost archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394—in front of him constantly while he both read the Qur'ān in Arabic and wrote his treatise against Islam.

Though less obviously, Ramon Martí, Riccoldo's older confrere, is also connected with this lost manuscript, or at least the works in it. For one thing, if we try to imagine who could have been responsible for introducing the archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394 with its Iberian contents into

the Dominican order, Martí is the obvious candidate. A Spaniard by birth, he had direct, lived experience of Islam, knew a wide range of Arabic and Islamic texts, and was better placed than any of his confreres to have access to Mark's translation and the *Book of Denuding*. More importantly, we can tell from his own works that he probably read the *Book of Denuding* and may have worked with Mark's translation as well.

What is certain is that Mark of Toledo's Qur'^{ān} translation and the *Book of Denuding*—the two works that make up the majority of the lost archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394—individually and collectively offered two strikingly, paradoxically different ways of engaging Islam's religious writings. On the one hand, both these Iberian works embodied not only considerable learning about Islam and the Qur'^{ān} but also extensive reading in Islamic Qur'^{ān} exegesis and the vast ḥadīth literature. But on the other hand, they both concealed that vast reading in other Islamic texts from the Christian readers for whom these works were intended, even as they vividly foregrounded the Qur'^{ān}. Mark called his translation the *Book of the Qur'^{ān}*, and to a remarkable degree it conforms to the Arabic Qur'^{ān} in its word-for-word method of translation and in other aspects of how it presents the text. Yet the many details of Mark's translation that depend upon his knowledge of how Muslims interpret the Qur'^{ān} are never signaled to the reader—there is no way for the Latin reader to tell what in his version is verbatim translation from what has been inserted from Arabic Qur'^{ān} commentaries. The author of the *Book of Denuding* makes a show of providing the name of every surah from which his many Qur'^{ān} quotations derive, but never makes clear to us the sources of his knowledge of Qur'^{ān}ic commentaries and ḥadīth. The authors of the key works in this manuscript, then, did their work in one way—they read widely in the broader religious literature of Islam—yet they presented it in another, as if it were the fruit of engaging the Qur'^{ān} and the Qur'^{ān} only, indeed as if they had taken what we might call a *sola-scriptura* approach to refuting Islam.

We can understand the difference between Martí's and Riccoldo's ways of engaging Islam as a result of their choosing one of these models over the other. Martí did what both Mark of Toledo and the author of the *Book of Denuding* did when creating their works: He read the Qur'^{ān} in the company of the same books with which Muslim scholars did, moving energetically among the sacred text, its commentaries, the ḥadīth, and biographies of the Prophet. In doing so he projected an image of Islam not so much as a religion of *the* book, but of many books—a religion, like

Christianity, based on a range of texts, expounded over centuries by learned scholars. Riccoldo, on the other hand, followed to its natural conclusion how those earlier Iberian Qurʾān readers *presented* their scholarly work in writing. Where they gave the superficial impression of working only with the Qurʾān among Islamic texts, he truly did so, and thereby reduced Islam as a long-enduring, complex religious tradition with its own capacious scholarly tradition to one dubious book by one unreliable author. To eviscerate that book, as Riccoldo argued aggressively to do, was to invalidate the whole phenomenon of Islam. When later medieval Europeans read about Islam, they were overwhelmingly likely to pick up Riccoldo's treatise. When they did so, it was this Islam, epitomized in the form of an easily refutable Qurʾān, that they encountered.

To see all this, it is necessary to look more closely at the works in our lost manuscript. As I have argued elsewhere—and perhaps ad nauseam—when Qurʾān translators in the premodern world attempted to make its Arabic speak Latin, they found that, given the serious lexical, grammatical, and contextual difficulties that the Qurʾān poses, they had to turn to Muslim sources to help them understand it, and their Latin translations frequently show evidence of this. There are countless instances of this practice in Mark of Toledo's Latin Qurʾān. He translated the first few words of the Surah (68) of the Pen, for example, as “By the fish and the pen” (*Per pisces et calamus*), despite the fact that in Arabic the verse invokes only the latter: “By the pen” (*wa-l-qalam*).⁶ In doing so he was oddly influenced by a common Islamic interpretation that was meant to resolve a problem that actually preceded these words, the letter “n” or *nūn*. Like many other Qurʾānic surahs, this one begins with one of the so-called mysterious letters. There is no consensus about what these letters (which generally appear in groups that do not form words) mean, but one common way to explain this particular instance was to cite a ḥadīth that tells us that the first things that God made were the pen and the fish—a great creature of the deep. Since one word for such a sea-creature is *nūn*, a homophone for the letter “n” in Arabic, the letter “n” (*nūn*) that precedes the opening invocation of this surah must surely stand for *nūn*, the great fish, which God fittingly mentions here in conjunction with an oath sworn by the Pen.⁷ Learning this interpretation somehow or another, Mark expanded the invocation of the first line to “By the fish and the pen.”

We find this sort of thing repeatedly in Mark's translation. But we should reiterate that while Mark drew on Islamic Qurʾān exegesis at many points, the fact that he did so remained entirely hidden from his readers.

Whereas Latin Qurʾān translators beginning in the sixteenth century often made clear where they had interpolated material from Muslim Qurʾān commentaries, in the surviving manuscripts of Mark's translation there is no way to tell where Qurʾānic text ends and amplification on it based on commentaries begins—no underlining or bracketing like we see in later centuries.⁸

The author of the anonymous *Book of Denuding*, the second work in the lost manuscript, likewise had intimate familiarity with the Qurʾān, which he not only quoted extensively, but cited with some precision. Normally he prefaced each quotation with a reference to the surah from which it is derived, sometimes in transliteration (“ut in Capitulo *Yesin* [*Yā Sīn*] . . . inquit”), sometimes in translation (“Et in Capitulo *Vaccae*”), sometimes in both (“Item in fine Capituli *Elmaiede* [*al-Mā'idah*], id est mensa”).⁹ But he must have been consulting Arabic Qurʾān commentaries as well, since he often quotes or paraphrases ḥadīths that are typically included in commentaries to explain Qurʾānic verses he has just cited, as in his handling of Q. 66:2: “God has ordained for you [Muḥammad] the means to be released from your oaths.”¹⁰ After quoting it, the anonymous author narrates the story of Māriya the Copt and the jealousy her relationship with the Prophet stirred up among his wives, just as do several ḥadīths that, for example, al-Ṭabarī quoted in his tenth-century commentary. Finally, this Mozarabic author draws directly on the ḥadīth literature—as opposed to quoting ḥadīths that he found in Qurʾānic commentaries—since we find a range of ḥadīths quoted or paraphrased when he is not discussing any Qurʾānic verses. In some cases he even includes the prefatory *isnād* or chain of authorities that verifies the ḥadīth: “My father related to me who said, Ahmed Elhasen son of Rasik related to me, who said . . . I heard Muḥammad saying, ‘My people will be divided after me into seventy-three divisions, of which one division will be saved; the rest will be sent to the fire.’”¹¹

Despite the fact that this anonymous author always cites the Qurʾān with care, however, he never names the sources of his knowledge of Qurʾānic commentary and ḥadīth. Rather, he typically introduces this material by such vague references as “a narrative that none of you doubt” or “an interpretation . . . of these two verses.”¹²

After the completion of Mark of Toledo's Qurʾān translation in the second decade of the thirteenth century, the next important product of Latin-Christian Qurʾān reading and anti-Islamic polemic that we know of in Iberia is the work of the Dominican friar and linguist, Ramon Martí. In

him we encounter the Latin world's most learned scholar of Arab-Islamic books before the seventeenth-century Jesuit, Ludovico Marracci (d. 1698). Yet there is reason to think that he, like his younger confrere Riccoldo, knew the works copied side by side in the archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394. Martí must have read the Arabic original of the *Book of Denuding* because there are passages in one of his own works that duplicate sections of that treatise, but in different Latin.¹³ But there is much else that links in particular his most important anti-Islamic work, *On the Sect of Muḥammad*, to the *Book of Denuding*. Their respective refutations of Muḥammad's miraculous splitting of the moon, for example, are very similar—both focus on how the principles of natural philosophy make such an event impossible.¹⁴ Moreover, we find hints that he knew Mark of Toledo's Qur'ān translation as well. In his *Explanatio symboli apostolorum* (*Explanation of the Apostles' Creed*) we find that a whole line of his translation of verse 35 of the Surah (24) of Light is very similar to Mark's.¹⁵ At other points he seems to be reworking Mark's version, as in a quotation of Q. 3:40 and 3:47–49 in his later anti-Jewish work, *Pugio fidei*. Among other things, both Mark and Martí make the same mistake here when they quote Mary's question to the angels in the Annunciation: "How will I have a child when no mortal has touched me?" Their versions of this sentence are otherwise very similar, and in both cases we have a *waw* of preceding circumstance, which introduces the second clause, mistranslated as "and" instead of "when."¹⁶

What is certain is that in his own works against Islam, especially *On the Sect of Muḥammad*, Martí energetically continues the reading practices of the earlier Iberian works contained in that lost manuscript. Like the author of the *Book of Denuding*, Martí not only quotes the Qur'ān extensively—usually in his own Latin translations of the Arabic—but also typically cites the surah by title, most often in transliteration and translation: "he said in the Qur'ān, in the tractate [*tractatus*—his term throughout for 'surah'] of *Errohmen*, that is, *Mercy*"; "he said in the Qur'ān in the tractate of *Alquitel*, that is, *Combat*."¹⁷ In a significant minority of cases, moreover, Martí even tells us in which *'ushr*, or decade, of verses within a surah the Qur'ānic quotation can be found, as when he prefaces a citation of Q. 5:89 by noting that "dicitur in *Alcorano*, in tractatus *Mense . X. c.*," or when he introduces a quotation of the beginning of surah 66 thus: "ut habetur in *Alcorano*, in tractatu *Prohibitionis. c. I.*"¹⁸ Presumably the "c." in these references abbreviates *capitulum*, meaning (rather ineptly) *'ushr*, while the number stands for the relevant *'ushr*: Q. 5:89 is

at the beginning of the tenth decade of verses of the Surah of the Table, while verses 66:1–3 that Martí cites in the second example are manifestly in that surah's first decade.¹⁹

Like both the author of the *Book of Denuding* and the translator Mark of Toledo, Ramon Martí consulted Arabic Qurʾān commentaries. In *On the Sect of Muḥammad*, he draws, for example, on the sixty-fifth book of al-Bukhārī's *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* that is devoted to *tafsīr al-Qurʾān*—Martí refers to it as *tractatus expositionis Alcorani*—in the course of quoting Q. 66:1–3.²⁰ In another case, Martí cites what he calls a “glosator Alcorani” in reference to the first verse of Surah of the Moon (54, *Surat al-Qamr*), which rather cryptically reads, “The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split.” Muslims had come to believe that these two clauses referred to one of Muḥammad's miracles, for as numerous ḥadīths relate, this passage was revealed when Muḥammad was standing outside Mecca, and the unbelieving Quraysh asked him for a miracle. He therefore pointed at the moon, and it split into two pieces that fell to the ground near Mecca. Most commentators insisted, therefore, that this event happened specifically *fī zaman al-nabī*—“in the time of the prophet”—as we find in al-Bukhārī's chapter on Qurʾān interpretation, and, very insistently, in the Andalusī commentator Ibn ʿAṭīyah.²¹ But Martí's business here was arguing that Muḥammad had never worked miracles, and therefore could not have been a prophet, so he points out that if the hour mentioned in the verse is understood as the “day of judgment,” which is grammatically possible, then the event described here must be something that will happen in the future and therefore Muḥammad did not work any such miracle in the past. “A distinguished commentator on the Qurʾān,” he observes, “approves and confirms this understanding (*sensum*) of the passage.”²² And it is quite true that, while most Muslim commentators argued that the passage did refer to a miracle of Muḥammad, “some of the people [of interpretation],” as the twelfth-century commentator al-Zamakhsharī put it, “[say] that the meaning is that [the moon] will divide on the day of the resurrection.”²³

Moreover—and like the author of *Book of Denuding* once again—Martí read extensively in a broader body of Arab-Islamic works that in many ways served fundamentally as Qurʾānic exegesis as well: the biography of the Prophet by Ibn Ishāq/Ibn Hishām and the collections of ḥadīth. Martí cites the former several times in *On the Sect of Muḥammad*, as when he quotes Khadija saying to Muḥammad, “O son of my uncle, I desire you on account of your noble lineage and your fidelity and your good

character.”²⁴ But the non-Qur’ānic Islamic sources that he cites most frequently are the ḥadīth collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. When describing the “lies of Muḥammad,” for example, Martí quotes a ḥadīth from al-Bukhārī’s *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* in which the Prophet remarked that “When the rooster sings he sees an angel, and when the ass brays it sees the devil.”²⁵ As other Christian polemicists had done, moreover, he quotes ḥadīths that described Muḥammad’s physical reaction to the experience of revelation: When Aisha asked Muḥammad “how that inspiration came” upon him, he answered: “Sometimes inspiration came to me just like the sound of bells, and this is the harder mode for me, and that sound recedes from me when I had remembered what He said; and sometimes an angel came in human form and spoke to me and I remembered what he said.”²⁶

Ramon Martí studiously tells us that both of these ḥadīths can be found “in a book which is called *Bochari*,” and this is his practice in citing his Arab-Islamic sources throughout. It is here that we find a marked difference from the scholarly practices of both Mark of Toledo and the author of the *Book of Denuding* who, as we have seen, both essentially conceal this information. Though not in the examples just above, Martí normally cited a ḥadīth collection by both the author’s name and by the relevant book within it (which he likewise referred to as a “tractate”): “in the book which is called *Bohari*, in the Book of *Creation*,” for example, referring to the fifty-ninth book of al-Bukhārī’s collection which is indeed called *kitāb al-khalq*; or “in the book which is called *Muzlim* in the tractate of Prayer,” referring to book four of Muslim’s *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*.²⁷ Like many a scholar—both medieval and modern—Martí at least once confuses one of these vast compilations for the other. In the “Book of Faith” in al-Bukhārī’s collection, he asserts, Muḥammad said, “There never was any prophet to whom the ability to make miracles was not given, on account of which humans believed in him.” As Martí’s modern editor points out, a ḥadīth very like this can indeed be found in al-Bukhārī, though not in the “Book of Faith,” but much later in the “Book of the Merits of the Qur’ān.”²⁸ Moreover, al-Bukhārī’s version differs from Martí’s at the crucial point: “There never was a prophet who was not given *that on account of which* humankind believed (my italics)—with no mention of miracles.²⁹ In Muslim’s collection, on the other hand, this ḥadīth in exactly the version that Martí cites—“There never was a prophet except that he was given miracles [*u‘ṭī min al-āyāt*] on account of which humankind believed” (my italics)—can be found at the beginning of the “Book of Faith.”³⁰

Such a mistake in citation sheds as much light on Martí's methods as his many accurate references. We see here a scholar who has clearly spent considerable time with both of these multivolume works, enough to have come across nearly the same ḥadīth in each collection, who knows that both collections have a lengthy section called the *kitāb al-imān*—"Book of Faith"—and who, like many a scholar in such a circumstance, has, partly because of the very amplitude of his research, got things just backward.

It is true that Martí does not always identify the Qur'ānic commentaries that he cites. Other than when he quotes al-Bukhārī's "Book of Interpretation of the Qur'ān," he prefaces such exegetical material by vague references to a *glossator* or *glossatores*. Yet in general, to read Martí's *On the Sect of Muḥammad* is to encounter the Qur'ān in the company of a range of other Islamic texts in a manner entirely unlike any other Latin work on Islam before Egidio da Viterbo's Arabic-Latin Qur'ān edition and translation of the early sixteenth century.³¹ Ramon Martí's familiarity with the *Book of Denuding* and, perhaps, Mark of Toledo's translation, therefore, encouraged him to adopt their way of studying Islam, though he went farther than his Iberian predecessors in carefully identifying, like the good scholastic that he was, all the sources he drew on.

The next—and perhaps only other—scholar who read the *Book of Denuding* and Mark's *Liber Alchorani* side by side in the lost archetype of BnF MS lat. 3394, Martí's fellow Dominican, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, drew a rather different lesson from them. Strikingly enough, though his extensive travels in the Islamic world had taken him to the heartlands of Islam in Syria, Iraq, and Iran, when he sat down to write his *Against the Law of the Saracens* after returning to Italy, the sources that he drew from, other than the Qur'ān in Arabic, were entirely of Iberian, rather than Middle-Eastern, origin. By far the two most important were the main works contained in the lost manuscript. As Jean-Michel Mérigoux, among others, showed in his 1986 edition, the anonymous *Book of Denuding* was the single most important source for Riccoldo's influential treatise. Not only does Riccoldo adopt much of its argumentative style, but he frequently quotes directly from it, sometimes in extenso.

Yet Riccoldo was undoubtedly able to read the Qur'ān in Arabic, as his own copy of the Arabic Qur'ān (Paris, BnF, MS ar. 384), covered with marginal notes in his own hand, testifies. Next to verse 4:1, where mankind is instructed to "Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and created from it its spouse, and propagated from both many

men and women,” Riccoldo wrote “Timete Deum uestrum qui uos creauit ex uno homine, creauit de eo mulierem et de eis multos homines.”³² This is something of a paraphrase, and some of the changes here may reflect Muslim commentators,³³ but it is entirely the work of Riccoldo. A number of similar examples can be found in the pages of this Arabic Qurʾān.³⁴

Riccoldo, therefore, had immediate knowledge of the Arabic Qurʾān, but he nevertheless normally consulted it with a copy of Mark of Toledo’s Latin Qurʾān at his side. José Martínez Gázquez and François DeRoche have shown, in fact, that the majority of the translated passages that appear in his Arabic Qurʾān are drawn directly from Mark’s *Liber Alchorani*.³⁵ I have calculated, moreover, that about 26 percent of the Qurʾān quotations in Riccoldo’s *Against the Law of the Saracens* likewise derive from Mark’s translation, and the great majority of these show up first, by the way, as notes in his Arabic Qurʾān. So our Italian Dominican read the Arabic Qurʾān alongside other books to be sure. What is striking, though, is the nearly complete absence of other Muslim, Arabic works among the codices that surrounded him as he worked.

Now it is true that Riccoldo’s notes on his Arabic Qurʾān sometimes contain information reflecting Islamic Qurʾān exegesis unavailable in any Latin form. At verse 34:14, for example, Riccoldo wrote a lengthy note in the top margin. Here the sacred text tells us that “When We decreed [Solomon’s] death, it was but a crawling creature of the earth which indicated to them he was dead, as it gnawed his staff.” This puzzling episode engendered much discussion among Muslim commentators, who, to explain its occasion of revelation, cited ḥadīths that told how God had caused Solomon to die, but then made him continue to stand upright, supported by his staff, for a whole year, and the Jinn, who had previously claimed to know hidden divine things (*min al-ghayb ashya*), did not notice this. Then God caused the “creeping creature” mentioned in the Qurʾān—often identified in the commentaries as the *araḍah* or woodworm/termite—to eat his staff. Solomon’s ensuing fall made clear that he was dead, and that the Jinn had no such knowledge.³⁶ Riccoldo’s note is preceded by the word “glosa,” and is clearly based on Arabic ḥadīths of this sort:

It is related that Solomon, while he was standing supported by his staff, suddenly was overcome by such pain that, while standing, died, but by divine miracle did not fall to the earth. The demons who served him, believing that since he was standing, he was alive, did not any of them dare

to frolic. And a certain worm emerged from the earth and gnawed his staff, and it broke, and Solomon fell to the earth.³⁷

In this case not only did Riccoldo jot down a “glosa” derived from Muslim commentaries in his Arabic Qurʾān, but he also put it to use in Chapter 4 of his *Against the Law of the Saracens*, where a paraphrase of this gloss is part of the evidence he assembles to demonstrate that the Qurʾān has neither the style nor the form (*modum*) suitable for holy scripture.³⁸ Yet while there are other places in his Arabic Qurʾān where he wrote notes that appear to depend on knowledge of the Muslim exegetical tradition, this is the only place where Riccoldo draws on the exegetical tradition directly in his famous treatise against Islam.

His direct use of ḥadīth in *Against the Law of the Saracens* is even rarer. Mérigoux, its exacting modern editor, has pointed out that a sentence in Chapter 9—“Muslims say that God promised Muḥammad that none would enter paradise before him”—is part of an authentic ḥadīth, and Riccoldo does not seem to be relying here on another Latin source.³⁹ But beyond this we find no sign that Riccoldo had any independent knowledge of the vast corpus of ḥadīth that played so central a role in Islam.

There is some irony in this, for in the same work he actually provides the only Latin discussion of the nature of the ḥadīth and ḥadīth scholarship of which I am aware: “The same Muḥammad made a book where he wrote twelve thousand stupefying narratives and when his admirers asked whether all these were true, he responded that only three thousand held truth, but all the rest were false.”⁴⁰ As deeply flawed and obviously polemical as this statement is, it does communicate something of the history of the ḥadīth—that there were, as Muslims themselves declared, tens of thousands of individual traditions of which Muslim, al-Bukhārī, and other compilers recorded only a few thousand authoritative ones in their collections. Furthermore, just before this passage, Riccoldo mentions that there are, in addition to what is in the Qurʾān, certain other “discordant things that Muslims assert as certain, and they are derived from the Qurʾān through exposition, and are contained explicitly in a book of narrations of Muḥammad.”⁴¹ It is not at all clear what he means by saying that these narrations are derived from the Qurʾān, but he captures here the close relationship between individual ḥadīths and specific passages of the holy text, and the phrase “narrations of Muḥammad” nicely captures the nature of the great majority of the ḥadīth. Yet it is striking that when Riccoldo goes on immediately to recount a few of these

many narrations, the examples he provides are derived, as Méri-goux shows, from one of his Latin sources, the *Doctrina Mahumet* (*Doctrine of Muḥammad*), a small collection of often dubious Islamic traditions translated as part of Peter the Venerable's Latin anthology of Islamic texts in the mid-twelfth century.⁴²

And indeed this is what we find over and over in Riccoldo's work. While he often does seem to be working directly with both Qur'ānic commentaries and the ḥadīth, in the great majority of cases he is simply borrowing the work of others, especially from the author of the *Book of Denuding*. In Chapter 8, for example, Riccoldo recounts the story of Muḥammad's love for Māriya the Copt in the midst of quoting portions of verses 66:1–5. This looks very much like he is relying on the ḥadīths generally advanced in the commentaries to explain these verses, but here, as in the immediately following account of the story of Zayd and Zaynab in relation to verse 33:37, he is simply abridging passages of the *Book of Denuding* based themselves on direct knowledge of Islamic Qur'ān exegesis.⁴³ Similarly when Riccoldo recounts a ḥadīth that describes the conversion of his uncle, he is entirely dependent on that same anonymous author.⁴⁴ Despite offering his reader a considerable quantity of material drawn from the ḥadīth, therefore, and despite providing the only descriptions in Latin of what the ḥadīth consists of (flawed though they are), Riccoldo's own engagement with the ḥadīth—at least while he wrote his treatise—was minimal at best, and his use of Qur'ānic commentaries only slightly greater.

His use of the Qur'ān was entirely different. While a significant number of his quotations of the Islamic holy book derive either from the *Book of Denuding* or from Mark of Toledo's Latin Qur'ān, more than forty percent of the Qur'ānic quotations in *Against the Law of the Saracens* are in his own translation. More remarkable than this is the fact that frequently when Riccoldo uses Latin versions of Qur'ānic verses borrowed from Mark of Toledo or the *Book of Denuding*, he nevertheless takes great pains to verify that they are correct. There is no better example of this than his handling of a portion of verse 3:93. Here the Qur'ān instructs that all food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel forbade himself before the Torah was revealed, and urges those who might doubt this to "Bring the Torah and recite it if you are sincere." Nearly a century earlier Mark of Toledo had translated this imperative as "Afferte legem decalogi et sequimini eum, si uos estis ueraces" (Produce the law of the Decalogue and follow it, if you are truthful).⁴⁵ But there was a glaring problem here:

Translating the Qurʾānic term *Tawrāh* as ‘law’ may have merit in this and a few other passages of the same surah, but the word has overwhelmingly been understood to refer more broadly to the Hebrew Torah—to say that it refers specifically to the Ten Commandments is beyond eccentric.⁴⁶

It certainly seemed so to Riccoldo, for when he wrote Mark’s version next to the same verse in his Arabic Qurʾān, he corrected it: “afferte *Pentateucum* et sequimini eum, si uos estis ueraces.” But the process did not end there. Riccoldo eventually decided to quote this verse in his treatise against Islam, and when he did so he spotted another problem with Mark’s version: The second verb of this passage (*fa-atlū*, ‘read, recite’) appears in his version as *sequimini*, ‘follow’. Since the root in question can certainly mean ‘to follow’, Mark’s choice here is understandable. Riccoldo, however, knew that in this passage the verb was understood to mean ‘read’ or ‘recite’, so when he quoted the passage in *Against the Law of the Saracens* he altered Mark’s translation even further: *Afferte Pentateuchum si estis ueraces et legite*.⁴⁷

Despite his dependence on Mark’s Latin translation, therefore, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce was passionately concerned with understanding exactly what the Arabic of the Qurʾān means whenever he cited it, and this process continued all the way through to the final preparation of the text of *Against the Law of the Saracens*. In the earliest extant copy of this work (Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, MS *Conv. sopp.* C 8.1173), thirty-eight of Riccoldo’s quotations of the Qurʾān have an Arabic number next to them that Mérigoux, who studied this manuscript closely, could not explain.⁴⁸ If, however, we consider these numbers in light of Riccoldo’s studious work with his own Arabic Qurʾān, a solution immediately suggests itself. In Chapter 15 of his treatise, for example, Riccoldo quotes verse 5:110, and in the Florence manuscript, the number “50” appears next to this quotation. Now it happens that Riccoldo’s own manuscript of the Arabic Qurʾān contains both modern foliation and medieval foliation in Roman numerals. In accordance with a practice that shows up in other Dominican manuscripts, the Roman numerals appear on the verso of each leaf, not the recto, referring, therefore, not to the front and back of a single leaf, but to the two sides—one verso and one recto—open before the reader.⁴⁹

If we turn, therefore, to the opening numbered “L” in Riccoldo’s Arabic Qurʾān, we find that we are indeed near the end of the fifth surah and that verse 110 appears in the top half of the verso open before us.⁵⁰ If we check the many other cases where a number appears beside a Qurʾān quotation in

the Florence copy of the *Against the Law of the Saracens*, we find the same thing.⁵¹ Riccoldo, therefore, must have written these references to his Arabic Qurʾān in his own final draft of *Against the Law of the Saracens*, and the scribe of the Florence manuscript transcribed them from Riccoldo's draft as he created this fair copy. Their function seems quite clear: They allowed Riccoldo to quickly compare the versions of Qurʾānic verses that appear in Latin in his treatise with the Arabic originals. Their presence next to thirty-eight of the Qurʾān quotations in this work attest to Riccoldo's fastidiousness with Islam's holy book. Even in the final stages of writing *Against the Law of the Saracens* he was turning back to his well-thumbed copy of the Arabic Qurʾān and wondering whether he had got it right.

We will not be surprised, then, to find that Riccoldo was equally fastidious in citing the Qurʾānic text. Like Martí before him, he carefully supplies the surah name, and occasionally gives his reader the *ʿushr* or decade number of the verse as well.⁵² Moreover, just as he corrected the Qurʾān translations that he borrowed from Mark of Toledo and the *Book of Denuding*, our punctilious Dominican also took the time to correct what he saw as their errors in citing the Qurʾān as well. For example, he borrowed a substantial passage from the *Book of Denuding* that decries God's permission to Muḥammad to dissolve his oaths. Here the earlier author had cited surah 66 by its common name, *al-Taḥrīm*, meaning "the Prohibition" (*Eltahrim* in Latin transliteration). While Riccoldo lifted most of this passage in *Against the Law of the Saracens*, including most of the translation of the relevant Qurʾānic verses, directly from the *Book of Denuding*, he had discovered that in his own Arabic copy of the Qurʾān this surah was identified with another, less common title. He changed it accordingly: *Elmetharrem* (*al-Mutaḥarrim*, 'the Prohibitor').⁵³ The Qurʾān, he clearly felt, simply must be cited with precision. As a Christian polemicist who, unlike Mark of Toledo, the author of the *Book of Denuding*, or Ramon Martí, had little direct knowledge of Qurʾānic exegesis and ḥadīth, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce was, nonetheless, a scrupulous reader of the Qurʾān in both Arabic and Latin. *Against the Law of the Saracens* almost inevitably, therefore, draws its reader's attention zealously to the Qurʾān rather than any other Islamic texts.

We might, of course, see all this as an accident of history: Rome would become the home of the earliest substantial collection of Arabic manuscripts in non-Iberian Europe by the Late Middle Ages, but one would be very hard pressed to find copies of Qurʾānic commentaries or the bi-

ography of the Prophet in Italy when Riccoldo returned there about 1300.⁵⁴ I have little doubt that this is partly true. Like any medieval author, Riccoldo wrote his treatise against Islam with the resources that he had at hand: Mark's Qur'²ān translation, the *Book of Denuding*, Alfonsi's chapter against Islam, his own copy of the Qur'²ān in Arabic.

Yet in doing so Riccoldo was, at the very least, also making a polemical virtue of bibliographic necessity. It is striking in this connection that not only does he make virtually no use of extra-Qur'²ānic Arabic sources, but he also reassigns their authorship, at least in the case of the ḥadīth. I noted above Riccoldo's assertion that "Muḥammad made a book where he wrote twelve thousand stupefying narratives." Here Muḥammad, the very flawed, human author of the Qur'²ān—as Riccoldo and every other medieval Christian had it—also becomes the single author of the enormous ḥadīth corpus. On Riccoldo's telling, therefore, Muḥammad and Muḥammad alone not only jiggered up the Qur'²ān, full of lies and irrational things, but if there are other Islamic books, Muḥammad jiggered them up too: Muḥammad is solely responsible for the whole ugly Islamic mess.

Such a presentation of Islam offered a considerable polemical advantage since it helpfully shrank the object under attack. Martí offered his readers the Qur'²ān within a complex web of other Islamic texts, and in doing so implicitly depicted Islam as a vital intellectual and religious tradition. To fight Islam on Martí's terms, especially if taken to their logical conclusion, would mean combating not only the teachings of the Qur'²ān, but the sophisticated, scholarly community across time that had found the Qur'²ān persuasive and profound. In a Latin culture—and particularly a religious order—so deeply in the thrall of the Arab philosophical and scientific tradition, this was a serious risk. What if, in engaging polemically with the biography of the prophet and the volumes of Qur'²ānic commentary and ḥadīth, one became enthralled with them as well, as so many learned Arabs clearly were?⁵⁵ Riccoldo, on the other hand, had narrowed Islam down almost entirely to a single text—the Qur'²ān—written by a single unreliable author, and whatever other Islamic books there may be are by him too. This is an enemy that could be much more easily cornered and conquered. Rather than refuting a populous and erudite religion, one had only to demonstrate the untruths and impiety of a single, isolated, false prophet.

Over the course of the later Middle Ages, Riccoldo's *Against the Law of the Saracens* would find countless readers. Not only did it circulate in

twenty-eight surviving manuscripts, but, when included in Theodore Bibliander's massive anthology of Islamic texts, it found still further readers in print. Even the Latin back-translation of the Greek version I mentioned at the outset attracted attention: Martin Luther came across it somewhere and translated it into German.⁵⁶ Marti's learned work, on the other hand, was known to few. We know of no more than five manuscripts, and certainly no one thought it worth putting into Greek or German. When Latin Christians were forced to come to terms with the religion that so strongly impinged on their world from the east and south they much preferred, we can only conclude, to think about the *sola-scriptura* Islam of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce.

5 The Anti-Muslim Discourse of Alfonso Buenhombre

Antoni Biosca i Bas

The year 1339 is the earliest date associated with the *Epistola Samuelis* (*Letter of Samuel*) a Latin dialogue between two rabbis about the truth of Christian belief. The text comes to us from the hand of Dominican friar Alfonso Buenhombre (d. c. 1353), who claims in his introduction that he is not the author of the text, but merely the one who translated it from Arabic into Latin after “discovering” it while in prison in North Africa. Although there is evidence that this provenance was invented by Buenhombre, who seems himself to have been the author, the text was later disseminated in hundreds of manuscripts and printed editions and became among the most widely circulated polemical texts of the later Middle Ages. Despite Buenhombre’s importance in medieval polemical literature, relatively little work has been done on his Latin corpus of writing, which is only now being edited for the first time in a critical edition. It is the aim of this essay to consider Buenhombre’s work in detail, paying special attention to his anti-Muslim discourse in his later work, *Disputatio Abutalib* (*The Disputation of Abutalib*). As I will show below, consideration of Buenhombre’s Christian sources proves that *The Disputation* is, like the more popular *Epistola Samuelis*, not a Latin translation of an Arabic text but a forgery and a fiction, and thus exemplifies the ultimate failure of the thirteenth-century Dominican polemical project.

Authorship and Bibliography

Despite the wide impact of his writing, there is little information about Alfonso Buenhombre himself. To reconstruct his life, we can use a document written by Pope Clement VI, dated in 1344, in which Buenhombre

is appointed bishop of Marrakech. We can also use the incipit of some of the manuscripts containing his texts in order to reconstruct some details of his biography. His birth, presumably in the late thirteenth century, probably was in Galicia because he always signed his texts as “frater Hispanus” and sometimes calls himself “Gallicus,” which can be interpreted as a variant of “Gallaecius,” or “Galician.”¹

The earliest date found in his manuscripts is 1336, which is the year given in *Historia Ioseph (History of Joseph)*, an apocryphal story about Joseph, son of Jacob, that Buenhombre claims is another translation he made from an Arabic original. Buenhombre, in fact, says he finished this translation in that year on the eve of All Saints Day while imprisoned by the sultan in Egypt. Based on the incipit and explicit of some of the manuscripts, we know the general circumstances in which he wrote this text. He was allegedly blamed for spying and was imprisoned with his missionary companion in Cairo, where he obtained some “Arabic books.” He translated them into Latin in order to send them to a “powerful friend” who could help ransom them from prison.

Judging by the incipit of his best-known work, the *Epistola Samuelis*, Alfonso Buenhombre was in Paris in 1339.² According to the book’s dedication, Buenhombre had similarly “obtained” this Arabic work in Morocco and subsequently translated it into Latin shortly before the given date. After the translation of this work, Buenhombre wrote the *Disputatio Abutalib*. There is no date in the explicit of the *Disputatio*, but we know that this work was written later than the *Epistola* because of a reference to the former text in the *Disputatio*’s prologue in which Buenhombre states that he is going to use the same method of translation in the latter as he did in the former. We can assume, therefore, that both translations were completed in a short period of time. The preface to the *Disputatio* refers to a previous captivity in Marrakech, the circumstances of which are unknown, but this “captivity,” if it really happened, cannot have taken place long before 1339, when the “translation” of the *Epistola* was completed.³ We can deduce that, around the years 1337–38, after his captivity in Cairo and before his presence in Paris, Alfonso Buenhombre stayed in Marrakech. There, he claims to have obtained the original Arabic books that he later, in Paris, translated into Latin under the titles *Epistola Samuelis* and *Disputatio Abutalib*. The writing of the *Disputatio* had to have taken place, therefore, in 1339 or soon after.

Based on the date of the incipit of Buenhombre’s later *Legenda Sancti Antoni (Life of St. Anthony)*, also proffered as a Latin translation of a sup-

posed Arabic original, we can find Buenhombre in Famagusta, Cyprus, in 1341. In the incipit to this hagiographical text, which was allegedly kept by Egyptian monks in a church dedicated to this saint, Buenhombre argues that Christians should be more interested in Arabic texts, because he believes that they can find in them valuable information not found in Latin texts. The following year (1342), he produced a text entitled *Tractatus contra malos medicos* (*Treatise against Bad Doctors*), claiming that it too was a translation of a popular medical work. Only one manuscript copy of this text survives.⁴ In the incipit we read that it is a new translation from Arabic, but there is no information about its origin or the place where Buenhombre translated it.⁵ The same year, Buenhombre's protector, Pierre Roger, former archbishop of Rouen, became Pope Clement VI. In 1344 he appointed Buenhombre "bishop of Marrakech," as we know from the surviving papal bull of his appointment. This document highlights Buenhombre's knowledge of Arabic as a useful tool for his polemical and missionizing purposes.⁶ In April 1353, a new bishop of Marrakech was appointed, and we can thus assume that Buenhombre's death took place shortly before this date.⁷ There is some evidence of other works by Buenhombre, but these texts have been lost.⁸ Of Buenhombre's five surviving works—*Historia Ioseph*, *Epistola Samuelis*, *Disputatio Abutalib*, *Legenda sancti Antoni* and *Tractatus contra malos medicos*—two works (the *Historia* and *Tractatus*) have never been printed, and two others (the *Epistola* and *Legenda*) were edited without taking into consideration all the existing manuscripts.⁹ I am currently preparing the first critical edition of Buenhombre's complete Latin works.

Authenticity and Arabic Sources

As we have seen, all five of Buenhombre's known works are introduced and presented as translations from Arabic rather than original works. This supposed provenance, however, must be carefully examined in each case. The *Epistola Samuelis* and the *Disputatio Abutalib* were almost certainly original works composed by Buenhombre, and this is likely the case for his three other works as well. The *Epistola* has often been attributed to one Samuel Marrochanus, mistakenly thought to be the Jewish convert to Islam Samaw³ al al-Maghribi (d. c. 1180), author of *Ifhām al-Yahud* (*Silencing the Jews*), a polemical text against Judaism. Nevertheless, a comparison of this work with that of Buenhombre shows it has nothing to do with the *Epistola Samuelis*.¹⁰ Moreover, the *Epistola Samuelis* and the

Disputatio Abutalib, the two theological works of Buenhombre, are themselves closely related. The *Epistola* takes the form of an attack against Judaism in the form of letters exchanged by two rabbis (Samuel, from Fez, and Isaac, from Sijilmasa), who finally come to believe in the tenets of the Christian faith through discussion of passages from the Hebrew Bible. Similarly, the *Disputatio* takes the form of a series of letters between a *faqīh* (Islamic jurist) and a rabbi in Toledo (also named Samuel), whose conclusions are similarly favorable to Christianity. In numerous manuscripts, the end of the text also includes a short chapter dealing with Islam. Based on biblical and Qurʾānic quotations, Samuel and Isaac similarly conclude that Muslims have also received a message that inherently supports belief in Christianity. The absence of this part in the oldest manuscripts of the *Epistola*, and the fact that the added chapter in fact reproduces part of the *Disputatio* itself, shows that it must be understood as a later addendum to the original text of the *Epistola*.¹¹ In short, we can conclude that the only anti-Muslim work of Alfonso Buenhombre is the *Disputatio*.

According to the incipit of the *Disputatio Abutalib*, the letters between Abutalib and Samuel were written in Arabic, and were then discovered by Alfonso Buenhombre in Marrakesh circa 1337–38, who translated them into Latin in Paris circa 1340. In the first, second, and third letters, Samuel and Abutalib express their doubts about the historical success of Muslims, Jews, and Christians. In the fourth letter, Samuel argues against Islam with the support of several Qurʾānic quotations, from which he understands that Jesus was the true Messiah. Through the biography, genealogy, and teachings of Muḥammad, he concludes that Muḥammad could not be the prophet of God. In the fifth letter, the longest, Abutalib argues against Judaism on the basis of Old Testament quotations, and he defends Islam, recounting the legend of the *Miʿrāj*, or night journey, of Muḥammad and defending the superiority of Muḥammad over Jesus and Moses. The sixth letter shows only Samuel’s confusion. Finally, the seventh letter contains the conclusions of Abutalib, where he discloses his knowledge of a “secret book,” a demeaning biography of Muḥammad. According to this secret biography, Muḥammad defended Christianity on his deathbed. On the basis of this source, Abutalib concludes the superiority of Christianity over Islam and Judaism and affirms the superiority of Christian baptism over Muslim ritual ablutions.

It is now absolutely clear that the *Disputatio Abutalib* is a forgery.¹² As Klaus Reinhardt has shown, all anti-Jewish information in the text is

taken from the writing of Franciscan exegete Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1349), and Buenhombre lies in adducing the sources he allegedly used. I do not intend to analyze here the sources of his anti-Jewish discourse, a question that deserves its own separate study. Nevertheless, the issue bears directly on Buenhombre's anti-Muslim discourse because Nicholas of Lyra was, among others, one of his primary sources. Through a more detailed consideration of Buenhombre's sources and arguments, we will be able to trace out the foundations of his falsified anti-Muslim discourse.

Buenhombre's Anti-Muslim Forgeries

The authority of Buenhombre's anti-Muslim discourse is based on the putative authenticity of an original Arabic text and the authority of Abutalib, the Muslim *faqih*. To manage these elements, Buenhombre uses a simple strategy. The use of some biographical data gives authenticity to the character called Abutalib, and the sources given in the text, which include quotations from the Qur'an and ḥadīth and references to Muḥammad's biography, are used to bolster the text's alleged authenticity. All this information is used in a biased way. The quotations from the Qur'an and ḥadīth are, as in earlier Christian sources, used to defend the Christian view of Jesus and Mary, and the biography of Muḥammad may serve to substantiate his inferiority in comparison with Jesus.

The translations of the Qur'an quotations are most interesting. They all come from the third surah. This choice is not accidental, because it is a surah in which the Qur'an refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Although it would be tedious to examine the content of these translations in detail, we can summarize them as describing the Annunciation to Mary and the messianic character of Jesus, according to the interpretation of Buenhombre.¹³

Some quotations coincide with the Latin versions of these same verses, as given by earlier Christian authors. One of them is the Catalan friar Ramon Martí, who wrote during the thirteenth century and is best known for his lengthy treatise *Pugio fidei* (*Dagger of Faith*), which included some Qur'anic quotations in Arabic written in Hebrew characters and translated into Latin.¹⁴ This author seems to have been a source for the Franciscan Nicholas of Lyra, who includes references to the beliefs of Muslims and some Qur'anic quotations in his *Tractatulus, or Responsio contra quendam Iudaeum ex uerbis Euangelii, Christum et eius doctrinam*

impugnantem (*A Short Treatise, or Response Taken from the Words of the Gospels against a Certain Jew who Impugns Christ and His Doctrine*). Nevertheless, Buenhombre's versions do not stem directly from Martí or Lyra. A comparison of corresponding Qur'anic passages shows the close link between Martí and Lyra and the difference between these and Buenhombre:

Buenhombre 4, 3 ¹⁵	Martí 3, 3, 7, 14	Lyra 1720
Oh Mary, God has chosen you, and has endowed you with his grace, and has decorated you and has chosen you from among all women, mothers of all sons. ¹⁶	Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you as brilliant from among the women of the world. ¹⁷	Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you as brilliant from among all the women of the world. ¹⁸

Although not all the citations given by Buenhombre are in the works of Ramon Martí and Nicholas of Lyra, the most significant are, albeit in different versions. In addition to the quotations referring to Mary, there are also those discussing the messianic nature of Jesus. Buenhombre's argument contends that Jesus is the Word of God, and that he is the only one who receives this name. This Qur'anic idea can be found in the writings of Martí and Lyra.¹⁹ The relationship between the work of Buenhombre and Nicholas of Lyra is most evident in the criticism against Judaism drawn from Lyra's *Quaestio quodlibetica de adventu Christi* (*Quodlibetal Question on the Coming of Christ*), as Reinhardt has shown.²⁰ Therefore, it is easy to assume that most of Buenhombre's Qur'anic quotations also came from Lyra, even though the wording varies.

There is, moreover, another indication of the Latin source of Buenhombre's Qur'anic quotations. After having studied twenty-six manuscripts of the *Epistola Samuelis* containing the brief anti-Muslim addendum, as well as all nine manuscripts of the *Disputatio Abutalib*, I have found that only one contains any text written in Arabic (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS 15956; see image 1). In this example, we can see a very clumsy copy of the Arabic text, written by a hand not familiar with its alphabet. The copyist, who had left the spaces ready for the Arabic quotations, seems to have consulted an Arabic Qur'an and tried

to copy the Arabic text, but he managed to do so only in a chaotic and confusing way. After a first attempt, he gave up this work entirely. The abandonment by the copyist is perfectly understandable, because it seems clear that the text he was copying contained only the Latin translations of the quotations but not the Arabic originals, which seem never to have appeared in any earlier manuscript. The copyist's failed attempt to insert Arabic text into the Munich codex shows that he had the intention of reconstructing an original source in Arabic.

Even more interesting is the appearance of quotations from ḥadīth collections. Again, some of these citations also appear in the work of Ramon Martí. We read in Buenhombre's *Disputatio*: "Muḥammad says in chapter 67 of his second book: Isa, that is, Jesus, in Jerusalem healed the sick, healed the blind, raised the dead."²¹ The same Qur'ānic quotation is found in Martí's writing: "I heal the blind from birth and the leper, and I raise the dead."²² The ḥadīth text given by Buenhombre is accurate and is in no way misquoted, reflecting the texts as they are found in ḥadīth collections such as those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. These two collections, however, are known by Ramon Martí and Lyra, who called them *Albokari* or *Albokan* and *Moçlim* or *Moselim*, as can be seen in these examples:

Buenhombre	al-Bukhārī	Martí	Lyra
In the chapter called The Family, it is said that no one has touched Satan except Isa, that is, Jesus, son of Mary. ²³	The Prophet said, "When every human being is born, Satan touches him on both sides of the body with his two fingers, except Jesus, the son of Mary." ²⁴	Abu Huraira said that he heard Muḥammad saying: None of the sons of Adam is born whom Satan does not touch when born, except Mary and her son. ²⁵	Abu Huraira said that he heard the prophet of God saying: None of the sons of Adam is born whom Satan does not touch, except Mary and her son. ²⁶

Another possible Christian source of one ḥadīth citation is the chronicle of Alfonso X of Castile, *Estoria de España* (*History of Spain*, also known as the *Primera Crónica General*), as can be seen in these overlapping passages:

Buenhombre	al-Bukhārī	Alfonso X
Muḥammad said that when he saw Jesus in Jerusalem, it seemed that water was springing forth out of his head, but there was no water there. ²⁷	Narrated ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar: Allah’s Apostle said “While I was sleeping, I saw . . . a reddish-white man with lank hair, and water was dripping from his head. I asked, ‘Who is this?’ They replied, ‘The son of Mary.’” ²⁸	John, the son of Mary, was blond, and it looked like all his hair was wet and dripping water. ²⁹

We can point to numerous other coincidences between the *Disputatio* and ḥadīth or the text of Alfonso X. A clear example is the reference to the age of Muḥammad when he became a prophet. The ḥadīths state that he was forty years old, a figure accepted by Goodman and slightly emended by Alfonso. The coincidence of the texts affords clear evidence of a dependent relationship.³⁰

Despite the similarities between Buenhombre and Alfonso X, it is also known that the latter relied on Christian sources, in particular the Latin chronicle *Historia arabum* (*History of the Arabs*), written by Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (d. 1247).³¹ The main point of overlap between the *Disputatio* and the work of Alfonso is the description of the *Mi‘rāj* of Muḥammad. It is easy to confirm by simple comparison that both the chronicle of Alfonso and the *Disputatio Abutalib* took the information from the chronicle of Jiménez de Rada, whose passage on the *Mi‘rāj* reads, “Gabriel took me to the first heaven, and in this sky the angels greeted me with laughter and joy, and they looked at me and they said ‘very good, very good,’ praying for my success in everything.”³² Alfonso X’s chronicle is very similar, as is Buenhombre’s *Disputatio*, which reads, “After he finished preaching, immediately, in view of all, the archangel Gabriel took him to the first heaven, that is, to the moon, and all the angels were waiting for him, and they all received him with joy, and they all prayed for his success in everything.”³³

The information given by Buenhombre about the life of Muḥammad is, perhaps, even more shocking. The *Disputatio* shows a brief biography of Muḥammad referring to his childhood and his first revelations. The source of this biographical information is again Jiménez de Rada, who narrates, for example, a scene in which two angels weigh the heart of

Muḥammad. This source, again, was incorporated into the chronicle of Alfonso X. All these biographical details conclude with a demeaning description of Muḥammad's death and burial.³⁴ This is the last and final argument against Islam. It is presented as being a book that "some *faqīh*" kept in secrecy. When mentioning this source, Abutalib is forced to concede reluctantly the obvious arguments against Islam. Of course, this "secret book" in truth never existed, and all this information about Muḥammad's death is drawn from Spanish historian Lucas de Tuy, who included this text in his *Chronicon mundi* (*Chronicle of the World*).

Buenhombre

Lucas de Tuy

Being next to him Albimor and his twelve disciples, and the most important disciple was Albimor, Muḥammad said: I will die soon, but my death should not worry you, because on the third day I will rise again, and I will always be with you. Albimor heard this and he doubted about these words in his heart. He was unable to contain himself, and he said to himself: I will check the words of my master. The third day came, and by night he put a strong poison in the glass of Muḥammad. When Muḥammad drank it, he knew he was going to die, but he did not know the cause of his death. He called Albimor and all disciples and leaders, and he said: I am not staying in this body, I will receive an immortal body to live in it forever. . . . Having finished this, with his wives Aixa and Safiya nearby, he died. Albimor and his disciples looked after his body. After twelve days an unbearable stench appeared, and, when they could no longer bear it, forced by the leaders, he was buried with the great group of leaders in the city of Medina Rusul, a city called by Latin people Town of the Envoy.³⁵

In the tenth year of his reign he said he was going to die and to be raised on the third day, but his disciple Albimor wanted to check if he would rise from his death, and he gave him a strong poison, with which Muḥammad knew he was going to die. . . . The disciples carefully guarded his body, hoping he would resuscitate. But an unbearable stench appeared and after eleven days, when they could no longer endure it, Albimor found the body chewed by dogs, and he carefully collected the bones in great presence of Saracens, and he buried the bones in the city of Medina Rassul, which in Latin is called Town of the Envoy.³⁶

The alleged biographical details of the characters in the Buenhombre's text are scarce, but those details that are given serve to authenticate the character of Abutalib, who is said to have traveled with Samuel to Jerusalem and Mecca in order to know the true value of Judaism and Islam. To improve their knowledge of both, according to the text, Samuel pretended to be Muslim while in Mecca and Abutalib pretended to be Jewish while in Jerusalem. There are references to this trip to Jerusalem, where Samuel is supposed to be under the protection of Abutalib:

You know, and you know the truth and you have seen it, when you and I were in that temple, and we were very afraid that someone of our people would accuse you of being a Jew, and, following your instructions, I called you my nephew, for enabling you to travel with me from Ceuta to Jerusalem with a Moorish name, and, in that way, you could see, visit and explore the city, the country, and the temple.³⁷

There are likewise some references to the trip to Mecca, and of "the Qur'ān you read me in Mecca, a copy of which, in Arabic, you left me, which I have brought with me and I have hidden." This trip to the holy places in Arabia included a visit to Medina: "You remember the time when you read the book of Ezra in Yathrib."³⁸

The biographical references always involve moments when Abutalib or Samuel are reading portions of the Bible or Qur'ān. These references are used not only to give authenticity to both characters, but also to represent them as wise. Among the references is a mention of their conversations in Marrakech: "You told me it when you were reading this book in Marrakech," or "when you were reading to me the Qur'ān in Marrakech."³⁹ This is especially interesting, because it includes a reference to a "priest" whom Samuel and Abutalib met at the court of Marrakech. He was proclaiming that Jesus was alive and that he was living far beyond the Caspian Mountains, and that he was coming soon to redeem the Jewish people. Despite these concrete references, however, even these biographical details about Abutalib seem to come from earlier Christian works. The information about the priest of the court of Marrakech, in all probability, comes from a description in Nicholas of Lyra's treatise *Tractatus*. In the *Disputatio*, Abu Talib says to Samuel:

When you were in Marrakech, and when I was called by King Olmlec, a person of your people went to the king and said: "I am the ambassador of Jesus, son of Mary, in whom Christians believe. He does not accept

their prayers, because they say that he died, but he lives beyond the Caspian Mountains, and soon he will come to judge the Jewish people, so prepare your home to receive him.”⁴⁰

This statement bears a striking resemblance to a similar one in Lyra’s *Tractatulus*, relating that “Others say that he lives beyond the Caspian Mountains expecting God’s command to go to free his people.”⁴¹

By tracing the text’s details to Latin polemical sources, it becomes clear that Buenhombre did not translate an existing anti-Muslim treatise from Arabic, but rather made use of existing Latin texts while claiming they were examples of original Arabic material. The analysis of Buenhombre’s sources can also give us a better idea about the purpose of his discourse. The work of Nicholas of Lyra is contemporaneous with that of Buenhombre, and the proximity of both authors suggests that, perhaps, Buenhombre made use of Lyra with the latter’s explicit permission. Apart from Lyra, all of Buenhombre’s sources are Iberian. These Hispanic sources, moreover, typify two branches of Christian writing in thirteenth century Iberia: the historiographical, with Jiménez de Rada, Lucas de Tuy, and Alfonso; and the theological, with Ramon Martí. We can say that in the *Disputatio Abutalib* the desire for conquest and dream of conversion that had prevailed in the thirteenth century converge.

We must not forget that in the thirteenth century there were no fewer than four crusades, and that during this time the Mongols defeated the Abbasid Caliphate. The century saw the great expansion of the Spanish Christian kingdoms, which conquered most of the Islamic territory of Spain. It was also in the thirteenth century when Franciscans and Dominicans applied with force their policy of conversion of Jews and Muslims, attempting to enact what John Tolan has rightly called “the dream of conversion.”⁴² The Franciscan policy of direct confrontation with Muslims had led to an influx into Islamic lands of missionaries who wanted to show their faith, who denigrated Islam and Muḥammad publicly, and who suffered martyrdom as a proof of the superiority of their religion. Francis himself tried to apply this policy, as did his followers. In 1220, for example, five Franciscans suffered martyrdom in Marrakech; in 1227, six in Ceuta; in 1228, two in Valencia; in 1232, five more in Marrakech. One could add many more examples to this list.⁴³

The Franciscan strategy was criticized by authors like Thomas of Chobam.⁴⁴ In contrast, the Dominicans postulated a different tactic and applied a policy of theological dispute, especially in the lands of the

Crown of Aragon. This technique was made possible through the support and understanding of James I, who worked with Dominican friars, such as Ramon de Penyafort and Ramon Martí. The Aragonese conquest was always accompanied by a religious mission, and the crown itself promoted the creation of centers that served to facilitate conversion “from within.”⁴⁵ For that reason, numerous Dominicans studied Arabic and Hebrew, as is shown in the *Pugio fidei* of Martí. Martí’s title *Pugio fidei*, the “Dagger of Faith,” evinces the Dominican intention of finding a theological weapon that could be used in religious disputes against Muslims and Jews. The Dominican strategy in approaching these disputes was clear: They had to know Jewish and Islamic texts in order to refute them and to facilitate the conversion of Jews and Muslims.

Nevertheless, such efforts met with little success. In 1295, the Mongol khan had converted to Islam, and, as a consequence, the Christian hopes of defeating Islam in a military pact between Christians and Mongols was definitely finished. Military conflicts continued, of course, but without the aim of conquering all the Islamic lands. Similarly, the religious disputes continued, but without the clear goal of winning massive conversions. In that sense, the fourteenth century opens on a note of pessimism. The Franciscan and Dominican friars (with the possible exception of Ramon Llull, who deserves a separate study) no longer saw the possibility of full success. In this respect, there is a substantial difference between the thirteenth and fourteenth century over religious controversies.

We must ask, therefore, how is it possible that as late as 1339 there appears a polemic like that of Buenhombre? What was the sense of this work? The *Disputatio Abutalib* fits the pattern of earlier Dominican works: It is an attack on Islam and Judaism from their own texts, as Martí had done. Buenhombre’s own life likewise coincides with the exemplary life of a Dominican friar: He was a theologian, a traveler, a bishop, and a translator of Arabic. The peculiarity of the *Disputatio Abutalib* lies in its theological success in representing the Christian victory over a rabbi and a *faqih*, who both finally convert to Christianity. The success is such that Christianity does not need to come to this dispute between Judaism and Islam, because the argument is based on the analysis of Jewish and Islamic texts, but without the presence of any Christian texts.⁴⁶ This success, however, is sustained over a void, elaborated over nothing but the inventions of fiction. The discussions between Abutalib and Samuel, and especially their Christian conclusions, never existed outside the imagination of Alfonso Buenhombre. Even the purported Arabic sources used for the dis-

anti-Muslim strategy that Ramon de Penyfort and Ramon Martí had inaugurated in the previous century. Buenhombre's strategy attests to the loss of confidence in the tactic of studying theological texts as a weapon against Muslims, betraying a loss of confidence in the original strategy of the Dominicans. Despite his optimism, Buenhombre and his text represent not a final success in the history of polemics but the beginning of their inevitable failure.

6 Reconstructing Medieval Jewish–Christian Disputations

Ursula Ragacs

In the winter of 2011, politicians from Austria and Liechtenstein were confronted with an unpleasant scandal. According to information in the newspapers, a lawyer connected with the government of Liechtenstein had helped an Austrian ex-politician conceal details of his monetary activities. He did that by “borrowing” some documents already delivered to the court, restoring them only some weeks later. The main question was whether the lawyer had “revised” the documents while they were in his possession so that the facts they showed could in no way incriminate his client. A special commission was formed to find an answer to that question. The event was of great interest to me, not so much because of its possible political consequences or the crime that might have been committed, but rather because it shows that the method of creating facts, and thus history, by constructing and reconstructing plausible texts is still widely used. With this in mind, I considered a similar case of creating authoritative texts, one that took place over seven hundred years ago.¹

In the summer of 1263, the disputation between Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides, c. 1194–1270) and the convert and Dominican friar Pau Cristià (Paul Christian) took place in Barcelona. Two texts give us an impression of what happened during the meeting: a Latin text, written during or very soon after the disputation by the Christian side on behalf of the king’s office;² and a Hebrew text, without much doubt written by the then-very-famous Rabbi Nahmanides some time after the event.³ Both texts show Friar Paul as being the first Christian scholar who did not polemicize against Judaism on the basis of rabbinic texts, but rather, who used them as arguments for the truth of Christian teachings.

Modern scholars agree that this new method led to a better understanding of rabbinic texts on the Christian side. But some think that the

use of rabbinic texts as arguments might also be understood to demonstrate a more positive stance on the Christian side toward Jewish literature, and the Jews themselves, than before the time of Friar Paul. Jeremy Cohen disagreed with such conclusions.⁴ In his opinion, there existed within the Dominican order in the thirteenth century a certain school that had an ideal picture of Jewish literature, and of the Jews themselves, which was not better, but rather was even worse than that of the Christians of earlier times. To the members of this school, the Jews of their time were not only incapable of understanding the Bible in the correct way, but even unwilling to do so. In the eyes of these Dominican monks, this put the Jews in the same category as Christian heretics, who should no longer have a place within Christian society.

Cohen viewed the then-famous Christian Arabist and Hebraist Ramon Martí (Raymond Martin) as a prominent member of the so-called Dominican school. His major work, the *Pugio fidei* (*Dagger of Faith*), finished in 1278, shows that it was very strongly influenced by the Barcelona Disputation and that Martí had a much greater knowledge and deeper understanding of Jewish literature than Christians before him. Nevertheless, it does not show a better understanding of—or even sympathy for—the Jews.⁵ On the assumption that Friar Paul was also a member of the “school,” Cohen concludes—on the basis of a comparison of the *Pugio fidei* with the texts about the Barcelona Disputation—that Paul’s view of Jewish literature and of the Jews themselves was the same as that of Ramon Martí.

Closer in time to the Disputation of Barcelona than Martí’s main work—the *Pugio fidei*—is another work by him: the *Capistrum Iudaeorum* (*Muzzle of the Jews*).⁶ It was finished in 1267, only four years after the disputation took place and presumably after the appearance of the text of Nahmanides. The following shows the results of a comparison of the reports on the Barcelona Disputation and the works of Ramon Martí by presenting two textual examples in full.

The First Example

Moritz Steinschneider’s edition of Nahmanides’s report starts with a quote from BT Sanhedrin 43a. It is normally seen as an introduction to the report and not as part of the disputation held in public. The text mentions five disciples of Jesus by name and reports that all of them were put on trial. Let us take a look at the text as it is found in the Talmud. Note that

the text plays on the similarity of the name Matai and the word “when” (*Matai*):

Jesus had five disciples: Matai (מתאי), Nakai, Nezer and Buni and Todah: They brought Matai (מתאי) [before the court]. He said to them: “Shall Matai be executed? Is it not written: *Matai* [מתאי, i.e., when] *shall I come and appear before God?*” (Ps. 42:3). They said to him: “Yes, Matai shall be executed, as it is written: *Matai* [מתאי, i.e., when] *shall die and his name perish*” [Ps. 41:6]. They brought Nakai. He said to them: “Shall Nakai be executed? Is it not written: *And Nakai* [the innocent] *and righteous slay thou not?*” [Exod. 23:7]. They said to him: “Yes, Nakai shall be executed, as it is written: *In the secret places doth he murder Nakai* [the innocent]” [Ps. 10:8]. They brought Nezer. He said to them: “Shall Nezer be executed? Is it not written: *Nezer* [a branch] *shall grow out of his roots?*” [Isa. 11:1]. They said to him: “Yes, Nezer shall be executed, as it is written: *But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable Nezer* [branch]” [Isa. 14:19]. They brought Buni. He said to them: “Shall Buni be executed? Is it not written: *Beni* [bny, i.e. my son], *my firstborn is Israel?*” [Exod. 4:22]. They said to him: “Yes, Buni shall be executed, as it is written: *Behold, I will slay Binkha* [thy son], *even thy firstborn*” [Exod. 4:23]. They brought Todah. He said to them: “Shall Todah be executed? Is it not written: *A psalm for Todah* [thanksgiving]?” [Ps. 100:1]. They said to him: “Yes, Todah shall be executed, as it is written: *Whoso offereth Todah* [praise] *glorifieth me*” [Ps. 50:23].⁷

A look at Steinschneider’s beginning shows that his version differs from the one quoted above: “They brought Matai [מתאי] [and] said to him: ‘Shall Matai be executed, as it is written: *When* [מתאי, i.e., Matai] *shall I come and appear before God?*’ [Ps. 42:3]. He said to them: ‘Yes, Matai shall be executed, as it is written: *Matai* [מתאי, i.e., when] *shall die and his name perish*’ [Ps. 41:6].”⁸ Chavel had already stated that Steinschneider’s version does not make sense.⁹ The difference between the two versions is obvious: According to Steinschneider, it seems as if the accused provides the reason for his execution, whereas the Talmud supplies us with the contrary—and more reasonable—version: namely, that the accused tries to prove his innocence while the accusers give the reason for their decision against him.

For the rest of the text, which speaks about the other four disciples of Jesus, Steinschneider shortened the text by always using the form אל”י as an introduction to the speakers. This seems to say that he wanted the whole

section to be read according to the sample text on Matai. What remains unclear is if Steinschneider intentionally supplied us with a distorted text or if this was just due to an error he himself, or the printer of his text, had committed. To find an answer to this question, I started by looking at Steinschneider's sources.

According to Steinschneider himself, he took the text of the second edition of the Hebrew report, printed in the *Milḥemet ḥovah* (*Obligatory War*, from 1710),¹⁰ as his base text and corrected it by using the *editio princeps* (Wagenseil 1681)¹¹ and two manuscripts: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS OR 4802/3, 30a–40b, and Breslau, Jüdisch-theologisches Seminar, MS Saraval 26a.¹² The comparison of Steinschneider's text with the one of the *Milḥemet ḥovah* shows that this text cannot have functioned as Steinschneider's source. The Leiden manuscript could not have been used by him either, as in this manuscript the passage in question is missing.

The *editio princeps* of Wagenseil provides us with a Hebrew text and a Latin translation. As none of the texts starts with the Sanhedrin text or Rashi's commentary, Steinschneider supposed that the Hebrew manuscript Wagenseil had used was incomplete.¹³ In Wagenseil's manuscript the report on the Barcelona Disputation followed the one on the first Disputation of Paris, 1240. A closer look into Wagenseil's book reveals that he refrained from copying part of his Hebrew manuscript because—according to his own words—he did not know to which of the two reports it really belonged: It might have been the end of the report on the Paris Disputation or the start of the one of Barcelona.¹⁴ As Wagenseil did not supply us with a copy of this Hebrew passage, we do not know which text he left out. But the words with which he started the Barcelona text make clear what must have been there: “It was likewise with our teachers, who were forced to reply to all of their absurd arguments. And according to this I write down the words I have replied to the mockery of Bruder [Brother] Paul the evil, may his name perish, who had spoiled his dish before my Lord, the king, and his advisors.”¹⁵

The first part of the text is a clear allusion to Rashi's commentary to BT Sanhedrin 43a (which I will examine below). Therefore, we may suppose that Wagenseil's manuscript also originally started with the Talmud text and Rashi's commentary to it. Although this is an interesting discovery, concerning the Steinschneider text we must state that Wagenseil's text cannot have been the source for Steinschneider's puzzling variant. Thus, the only remaining possible source for Steinschneider must have

been MS Saraval 26a. MS Saraval 26a is lost, but fortunately a copy of it has survived in St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, MS A 207.¹⁶ But as the comparison shows, this manuscript also cannot have been the source of Steinschneider's version. Thus, none of Steinschneider's sources provides us with an answer to the question formulated above.

The next step was to check all of the manuscripts of the Hebrew report available that contain the text in question. This step yielded two astonishing results: First, none of the other manuscripts may have functioned as a source for Steinschneider's version, as none of these texts provides us with the text he gives. Thus, the question as to why Steinschneider's text was printed the way it was remains unanswered. Second, from a chronological point of view all the manuscripts older than St. Petersburg MS A 207 quote only the sentence concerning Matai and combine it with the commentary of Rashi. The first manuscript to quote the whole passage of the Sanhedrin text, which means the text for all of the five disciples of Jesus, was St. Petersburg MS A 207. St. Petersburg MS A 207 is dated 1689 but its lost master copy, MS Saraval 26a, was dated 1578. Thus, it seems that up until the sixteenth century, none of the copyists of Nahmanides's text felt the need to quote the whole passage of the Talmud text. The question is, why?

To answer this question, let us take a look at Rashi's commentary on Sanhedrin 43a and the opening words of Nahmanides's report: "[Rashi] wrote: 'They were connected with the government and [so] they were forced to reply to all of their absurd arguments.' And according to this I [Nahmanides] write down the words I have replied to the mockery of Frai Paul who spoiled his dish in front of many."¹⁷ Nahmanides's statement, following Rashi, seems clear: Because his adversary—the convert and Dominican Paul Christian—was connected with the government, he, Nahmanides, had to answer all the absurd questions and arguments Paul had raised, just as the rabbis had to do when confronted with the case of Jesus and his disciples. Rashi's commentary on BT Sanhedrin 43a was originally given for the part of the text concerning Nakai and not for the one on Matai. The text-critical view now allows us to conclude that the introduction of Nahmanides's text must originally have consisted of the shortened Talmud text—just the first sentence or part of the whole text—as an allusion to the Talmud text, which is connected to the Rashi text. The answer to the question formulated above thus may be that the earlier copyists of Nahmanides's report understood that Nahmanides did not focus on the Talmudic text but on Rashi's commentary. But whereas

the earlier copyists followed the original, some of the later copyists no longer understood why the Talmudic text was not given in full, and therefore corrected what they understood to be an error. Such a version was published in the second printing of 1710, and Steinschneider followed that version, but he either intentionally or erroneously changed the text.

The conclusion drawn is a matter of major importance because it solves the problem Hyam Maccoby already faced with this part of the Nahmanides's text—namely, that due to the highly offensive character of the Talmud text toward the Christians, it seems more than strange that Nahmanides should really have opened his report with it.¹⁸ The confirmation that Nahmanides's focus was actually on the Rashi commentary changes this picture. It makes clear that by using this text, Nahmanides provided an explanation as to why he had to answer his adversary, although he knew from the start that Friar Paul's arguments would be senseless and foolish. Nevertheless, one question remains unanswered—namely, why did Nahmanides choose this text and not another one as his starting point? Did he have any reason other than the simple fact that the text seems to be a perfect statement with which to begin his report?

The starting point of my answer to that question is a manuscript in which a shortened version of Nahmanides's Hebrew report is given—namely, Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, MS Or. 53/3—dating to the fourteenth century.¹⁹ The passage in question says:

He [Friar Paul] asked about [the passage] in Sanhedrin [43a] [that reads]: “Jesus had five disciples. They brought Matai [מָטַי] [before the court].” He said to them: “Shall Matai [מָטַי] be executed? Is it not written: *Matai* [מָטַי i.e., when] *shall I come and appear* [Ps. 42:3].” They said to him: “[Is it not written]: *Matai* [מָטַי i.e., when] *shall die and his name perish* [Ps 41:6].” Rashi wrote: “He was connected with the government.” And the Rav [Nahmanides] did not want to respond to that because it is [one] of the essential things of [their] faith.²⁰

The difference between Nahmanides's version and this one is evident: Whereas in Nahmanides's text the Talmudic quotation and Rashi's commentary are used as an introduction, according to the Rome manuscript version, the texts were quoted by Nahmanides's adversary, Friar Paul, as a prelude to what should follow. Robert Chazan argued convincingly for the Rome manuscript version to be understood as the result of a misreading by its copyist.²¹ Nevertheless, this version made me curious: What if

it were really Friar Paul and not the rabbi who started the debate by using this text? A look at the texts of Ramon Martí seems to provide us with a possible answer to this question.

In the *Capistrum* as well as in his *Pugio fidei*, Martí used another part of Sanhedrin 43a—namely, the text preceding the story about the five disciples of Jesus. In that text, the Talmud speaks about Jesus himself and that he was hanged on the eve of Pesach. The last sentence of this text, followed immediately by the text on Jesus's disciples, says: “Yeshu . . . karov le-malkhut haya.” In Epstein's English edition, the text reads as follows, “Yeshu . . . was connected with the government [or royalty; i.e., was influential].”²² Epstein's²³ interpretation in square brackets (namely, that a connection to the government means influence on it) is the same as, for example, Jastrow's understanding of the word *karov*.²⁴ Martí translated *karov* with ‘propinquus’ and *malkhut* with ‘regnum’. Martí's interpretation of these words is innovative. In the *Capistrum* one reads, “The Lord Jesus was close to the king. Thus it is said about him that he is from the seed of David.”²⁵ The *Pugio fidei* says, “Ula said that Jesus the Nazarene was near to the king, that is that he was of the royal family.”²⁶ According to Martí, the words of Sanhedrin 43a confirm that Jesus was, due to the genealogy of his mother Mary, an offspring of the Davidic line and has therefore to be accepted by the Jews as their predicted Messiah ben David.²⁷

Martí's understanding of the Sanhedrin text is interesting. But even more interesting is the fact that the text he uses is connected in the Talmud directly to the one with which Nahmanides opened his report. Bearing in mind what the copyist of the Rome manuscript said—namely, that Nahmanides did not want to respond to Friar Paul's argumentation on the basis of the Sanhedrin text “because it is [one] of the essential things of [their] faith”—we might suppose, on the basis of Martí's texts, that Friar Paul did in fact start with a quote from Sanhedrin, but not with the one Nahmanides mentioned. Instead, it seems possible that he quoted the part Martí used, showing a willingness to argue the same way. Surely the question of Jesus's genealogy was a major concern for the Christian side. Thus, the expression “essential things of faith” would have met the point.

If this is what really happened, then we have found the reason for Nahmanides's choice of this text. Moreover, Nahmanides's answer to Friar Paul is as clever as Martí's interpretation: By jumping from one sentence of the Talmudic text to the next, he could start with a quotation from

the same part of Sanhedrin, use the keywords of the Talmudic text in the context in which Rashi put them, and thus gain a text totally different from what Friar Paul had in fact said.

The reconstruction, as executed above, is of course a somewhat bold one, and there is at least one major point that contradicts it: The Latin report does not provide us with a quotation from Sanhedrin 43a, neither with the text with which Nahmanides begins nor with the one quoted by Martí. Nevertheless, it is not totally impossible that things happened as described above because, as has often been said, not all of what must surely have been discussed during the disputation is reflected in the texts that inform us about it. This statement leads us to the second textual example.

The Second Example

According to the text of Nahmanides, one of the rabbinic texts Friar Paul used was a quotation from the midrash *Eikha Rabbah* (*Lamentations Rabbah*).²⁸ In this text, it is said that the Messiah had already been born and that his birth took place on the day the Second Temple was laid in ruins. The rabbinic text runs as follows:²⁹

Fray Pul [Paul] then reverted [to the original topic], arguing that they say in the Talmud that the Messiah had already come. He quoted the homily in the Midrash on Lamentations concerning a [Jewish] ploughman whose cow lowed while he was ploughing. A passing Arab called to him, "Israelite, Israelite, untie thy cow, untie thy plough, take apart thy ploughshare, for the Temple has been destroyed." So he untied the cow, untied the plough and dismantled the ploughshare. The cow then lowed a second time. The Arab said to him, "Tie thy cow, tie thy plough, tie thy ploughshare, for your Messiah has been born."³⁰

Friar Paul was not the first Christian to use this text in his struggle with the Jews. The first to mention the contents of the text without mentioning his source was Amulo, archbishop of Lyon, who died in 852 CE. In a letter to the king, he said that in the course of time the teachers of the Jews had spread a large number of errors that blinded the Jewish people. As one of these errors, he quotes the idea that there will be two Messiahs for the Jewish people, and that one of them—the Messiah from the house of David—had already been born, and that that had happened on the day when the Temple was destroyed.³¹ In his *Pugio fidei*, Ramon Martí also

speaks about the rabbinic text in a negative manner.³² But even before this, in his *Capistrum*, Martí calls the text a Jewish error.³³

The question one has to ask at this point is: Why did Friar Paul, in his disputation with Nahmanides at Barcelona, use as an argument for the Christian side a text, which—both before and after him—was seen by the Christian side as a text not to be taken very seriously? To answer this question, one has to look more closely at the context in which Friar Paul's quotation of the midrashic text appears, according to the text of Nahmanides and the Latin "protocol" of the Barcelona Disputation, and the context in which the text is quoted in the *Capistrum*.

According to the text of Nahmanides, the disputation started with an argumentation about the correct understanding of Genesis 49:10. From this, the Christian disputant moved on to the rabbinic text. After having heard the text of the midrash, Nahmanides's first answer was, "I responded, I am not receptive to this homily, but it is a proof of my words."³⁴ This answer rouses the anger of the Christian spokesman: "[Fray Paul] shouted, 'See, he [himself] is renouncing their [sacred] books!'"³⁵ To this Nahmanides gives a longer and more elaborate answer:

"Truly, I do not believe that Messiah was born on the day of the [Temple's] destruction. Either this homily is not true or it has another meaning, [which lies] among the secrets of the Sages. Yet, [even if] I would accept its literal meaning as you have expressed it, then it is a proof for my contention, for this [midrash] relates that the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction, after that event. If so, the Nazarene could not be the Messiah as you have said, for he was born and was killed before the destruction. According to the truth, his birth took place about two hundred years [sic] before the destruction, and according to your reckoning, [it occurred] seventy-three years [before the destruction]." The man was thereupon silenced.³⁶

As can easily be seen, Nahmanides's answer is twofold: First, he argues that he does not believe in the text. Second, he says that if he accepts the text as written, then Jesus cannot be the Messiah, as he was not born on the day the Temple was destroyed.

According to Nahmanides, the next to speak is not Friar Paul but a certain Master Guillem.³⁷ He says, "The present discussion is not about the Nazarene, but whether the Messiah had come or not. You have stated that he has not come, but this book of yours says that he did come."³⁸ On this, Nahmanides has a third and more sophisticated answer: He

distinguishes between the birth of the Messiah and his coming as the redeemer of Israel. This argument is also mentioned in the Latin “protocol.”³⁹ According to the Hebrew report Nahmanides said:

The Sages did not say that [the Messiah] had come; they said he was born [on the day of the destruction]. Moses our teacher did not come [before Pharaoh] on the day he was born, nor was he a redeemer at that time. However, when he came before Pharaoh by command of the Holy One, blessed be He, and said to him, Thus saith the Eternal, the G-d of Israel: Let My people go, etc.⁴⁰ then [it could be said that] he had come. Similarly, when the Messiah will come to the Pope and say to him by the command of G-d, “Let My people go,” [it will be said of him that] he has come. To this day, however, he has not yet come, nor is he the Messiah at all. When King David was born, he was neither king nor the anointed one, but when Samuel anointed him, then he became the anointed one [i.e., the king]. On the day when Elijah [the prophet] shall anoint [the true redeemer] as a Messiah by command of G-d, then he will [correctly] be called “Messiah.” Afterwards, when he shall come to the Pope in order to redeem us, then it will be said that the redeemer has come.⁴¹

At this point in the disputation, other things were mentioned, and the discussion about the text of *Eikha Rabbah* ceased. According to Nahmanides, the text of *Eikha Rabbah* is mentioned just once more during the further course of the disputation, and again it is not Friar Paul who speaks about it. This time it is the king who wants to know further details.⁴² With Nahmanides’s answer to his question, the discussion about this specific text ends. Although the Latin “protocol” also refers to the text of *Eikha Rabbah*, the part on the Messiah’s birth on the day of the destruction of the Temple is not mentioned.⁴³ That the *Capistrum* is influenced by the Barcelona Disputation, as Nahmanides presents it, may be seen in the fact that Ramon Martí uses the text of *Eikha Rabbah* in the context of the discussion about Genesis 49:10, which is in accordance with Nahmanides but not with the Latin text, which mentions the discussion about this verse later on.

Another argument for the influence of the disputation on the *Capistrum* lies in the fact that in the first part of the *Capistrum*, Martí wants to show that the Messiah was born before the destruction of the Temple, and in the second part he argues that the Messiah was not only born before the fall of the Temple, but also came before it. The differentiation between the birth and coming of the Messiah clearly reflects the ar-

gumentation of Nahmanides. As mentioned above, Martí does not see the quotation of *Eikha Rabbah* as a useful argument in the struggle with the Jews. Much like Amulo earlier, Martí judges it as a Jewish error or, even worse, as a Jewish insanity, as he calls it in the *Pugio*.⁴⁴ The question we asked was why Friar Paul used a text as an argument for the Christian side that—before and after him—was seen by the Christian side as a text not to be taken very seriously.

After having examined the texts we may now state the following: In the Latin version of the disputation, there is no mention of the idea that the Messiah was born on the day the Temple was destroyed; therefore one cannot expect to find in this text any further statement about it. The idea of the Messiah's birth on the day of the Temple's destruction is mentioned only in the Hebrew description of the encounter, according to which it is Friar Paul who quotes the text and is willing to use it as an argument for the Christian side. But whereas—according to Nahmanides's report—he failed to do so, we may assume, based on what we have learned from Martí's texts, that Friar Paul wanted to express the same opinion that Martí did in his *Capistrum*—namely, that although the text is right in arguing for the birth of the Messiah, the Jews are too stubborn to admit that this event did not happen on the day of the destruction of the Temple but was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ. This means that we may assume that in his disputation with Nahmanides, Friar Paul did not use as an argument for the Christian side a text that—before and after him—was seen as one that could not be taken seriously. We assume, rather, that he, too, did not accept this text and that he, too, did not accept its creators—a fact that Nahmanides did not, or, in all probability, did not want to, report.

Conclusion

Described above in full are just two textual examples. The examination of the two descriptions of the Disputation of Barcelona and its comparison with the *Capistrum* as a whole, as presented in the German article mentioned above,⁴⁵ showed the following: In Barcelona Friar Paul argued on the basis of twelve different rabbinic texts, eight of which are also used in Ramon Martí's *Capistrum*. On the basis of the texts treated in the *Capistrum*, one can reconstruct parts of the disputation that occur in neither the Hebrew nor the Latin text. This reconstruction shows clearly that neither description mentions everything that was discussed in Barcelona.

Because of the gaps in the descriptions in this respect, nothing can be said about Friar Paul's attitude toward the texts he uses or about his attitude toward the Jews themselves. But the reconstruction on the basis of the *Capistrum* shows quite clearly in at least three cases that his attitude toward both must have been the same as Martí's and the same one that Cohen attributes to the so-called Dominican school: a negative one. And the reconstruction also makes it clear that during the disputation, Friar Paul did not refrain from expressing this opinion in public.

As a twenty-first-century researcher in textual criticism, I know very well that the *reconstruction* of a text more often than not results in the *construction* of a new one. Nevertheless, and clearly recognizing the shortcomings of my conclusions, I hope that what I have said may at least be part of a truth that is, as we all know, told neither in the Latin nor in the Hebrew report of the Disputation of Barcelona. Thus, my article is to be seen as the attempt to create another picture of what we all think might have happened in Barcelona, because it is my conviction that just to state that the texts we have do not report the "real history" is insufficient to change the picture we have in our heads. To do so, we have to rework the texts and write another story, which has to be at least as plausible but hopefully also true.⁴⁶

PART III

Authority and Scripture between Jewish and Christian Readers

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7 Reconstructing Thirteenth-Century Jewish–Christian Polemic

FROM PARIS 1240 TO BARCELONA
1263 AND BACK AGAIN

Harvey J. Hames

“And it was when he stood on trial before them, and our God, blessed be He, was zealous about His Torah . . . and He put in his heart, and the answers were in him, to give correct replies to those who speak falsely and incite.”¹ This is how the Hebrew account of the public disputation against the Talmud held in Paris in 1240 portrays the Jewish protagonist, Rabbi Yehiel of Paris, as he sets out to do battle with the Christian representative, the apostate Nicholas Donin. An account of the cut and thrust of the polemical encounter follows with Yehiel ably overcoming the questions posed by Donin. This text, seemingly, is evidence of the first public encounter between Jews and Christians over the Talmud and is seen as the precursor of both Barcelona 1263 and the Disputation of Tortosa in the early fifteenth century.

Yet, unlike both Barcelona and Tortosa, where there is compelling Christian textual evidence showing that these public disputations actually took place, the Christian sources dealing with events in Paris in 1240 and their aftermath do not mention a public disputation, nor do they give any indication that Nicholas Donin was actively involved in the process. Indeed, the Christian sources suggest that there was an inquisitorial-like procedure before a specially appointed commission made up of senior clergymen including the bishop of Paris and the chancellor of the university, during which Rabbi Yehiel and another rabbi, Judah ben David of Melun, were asked a series of questions based on a list of thirty-five accusations compiled by Nicholas Donin and forwarded to Paris by Pope Gregory IX.² Both rabbis responded with short, succinct replies, which

are noted in a notarial document of the proceedings, and that, seemingly, was the sum of the active Jewish participation in the process.³ The tribunal then drew up its conclusions, which were acted upon with the burning of the Talmud in 1241 or 1242.⁴

The discrepancies between the extant Jewish and Christian sources have been addressed by scholars, who have tried to make sense of the sources and provide a timeline of events. One suggestion is that the whole process was an inquisitorial proceeding against the Talmud and in this sense was very different from what occurred at the Barcelona Disputation, and the Hebrew version is a literary invention and manual for future Jewish polemicists.⁵ Another suggestion is that there was first a *disputatio*, reflected in the Hebrew text, followed by the more formal inquisitorial investigation reflected in the Latin sources. This supposition maintains that these two different processes are mentioned in the Latin manuscript containing the *Extractiones* and the confessions of the two rabbis, Yehiel and Judah, as well as in Odo of Chateauroux's letter in 1247 to Innocent IV and in Joseph ben Nathan Official's *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne'* (*Book of Joseph the Zealot*).⁶ However, in no place, save for the Hebrew account, is Nicholas Donin mentioned as taking part in any of the proceedings, and notwithstanding the aforementioned attempts to show otherwise, the Christian texts do not explicitly mention the disputation and it is hard to know where to place it. Hence, it is only on the basis of the Hebrew text dealing with the events in Paris in 1240 that it has generally been accepted that a public disputation was held between Rabbi Yehiel of Paris and the apostate Nicholas Donin in the presence of the king's mother, Blanche of Castile, and bishops of the realm, along with representatives of the mendicant orders and other members of the nobility.

The two earliest, and probably best, manuscripts containing the Hebrew text of the Paris Disputation are very interesting and complement each other in showing how the disputation was perceived by their compilers. The Paris manuscript, which was probably compiled during the 1270s in Paris, seems to be a copy of the original, though some questions about how the copyist went about his work and who he was remain unanswered.⁷ What is fascinating about this manuscript is that it opens with a couple of pages from the eighth and the start of the ninth chapter in the section dealing with redemption of Sa'adiah Gaon's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* (written in the late ninth century), which deal with the question of whether the prophecies of comfort have already been fulfilled, as

some who call themselves Jews and Christians suggest.⁸ This is then followed by Joseph ben Nathan Official's polemical work, *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁹, which itself opens with a section designed to show that the prophecies of comfort have not yet been fulfilled, as Christians claim. The last section of this polemical work consists of proofs against Christianity taken from the Gospels and ends at the bottom of the page, immediately followed at the top of the next page by the text of the Paris Disputation.⁹ The colophon of the record of the public disputation shows how intimately these two texts are connected:

Donin, the heretic, finished his questioning. . . . And he asked all these questions of Rabbi Yehiel, the son of Rabbi Joseph, may his memory be blessed, and "his resting place will be glorious" [Isa. 11:10].¹⁰ And all this was in the presence of the king and queen in Paris, in the royal palace, where also present were the bishops of Sens, Senlis, and Paris along with the Dominicans and Franciscans, in the year *aharit*, 5th of Tammuz, Monday of the weekly portion Balak and the following Tuesday.¹¹ And the spirit of the Lord rested upon him to reply to the questions one after the other even though he was alone amongst the gentiles. . . . And during these days he was imprisoned so that he would not reveal his replies to his contemporaries. And Rabbi Judah, may his memory be blessed, was brought after him on Wednesday of the weekly portion Balak, and he answered with finesse.

And the questions of the heretic and the believer were finished.¹²

The identity of the author of these two texts, Joseph ben Nathan Official, can be established from the start of *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁹ and from other sections in the work, as well as from an acrostic which follows the end of the colophon, but in a different hand from that of the rest of the manuscript.¹³ In the colophon, Joseph lists the bishops who were present at the disputation and they are the same ones who, along with mendicants and other Christian clerics, figure prominently in many of the passages of *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁹. It is also of interest that Rabbi Yehiel himself appears as the Jewish protagonist in two sections of *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁹.¹⁴ The end of the colophon strongly suggests that the two works, along with the couple of pages taken from Sa'adiah Gaon's writings, were meant to be understood as conveying the same message. This compilation was intended to demonstrate that the Christians were speaking nonsense about the coming of the Messiah and that the Jews have all

the responses necessary for combating Christian attacks, as well as qualified rabbinic leaders who can represent them when needed.

The second manuscript, now in Moscow, also supports this supposition.¹⁵ In a fourteenth-century Byzantine hand, this manuscript opens with Jacob ben Reuben's *Wars of the Lord* (*Milhamot ha-Shem*), written in the south of France, which contains the record of many informal disputations with leading Christian figures. The text that follows this is an account of the 1240 Paris Disputation, which ends with these words:

Rabbi Yehiel, the son of Rabbi Joseph gave all these responses to Donin, the heretic, may his name and memory be cursed. And the Rabbi [Yehiel] commanded on his deathbed, "and his resting place will be glorious."¹⁶ And following this, the responses to the questions that the other rabbis were asked, and God united their responses into one, and they answered with finesse.¹⁷

Although distinct from the ending of the Paris manuscript, there are certain elements and phrases that appear in both these short passages and that suggest that both have the same source, though in the Moscow manuscript, what is more important is not the connection with *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne'*, but the significance of the Paris 1240 text for the next work in the compilation, which starts immediately after this citation. This next report is the second Paris Disputation of 1272 where the Christian protagonist is the same Fra Pau (Friar Paul) who led the Christian charge at the Barcelona Disputation. The connection between the two works is made clear in the opening lines:

These are the responses to the heretic who arose against us in the year 5032 [1272 AD], and he came from Spain to obliterate the remnant of Israel, and his name was Paul the Dominican. Hence, "the wise men who count the letters were called"¹⁸ to respond to the Epicureans [*apikoresim*, 'heretics'], and "wherever they made heretical statements, the response was ready."¹⁹ Hence the heretics are called *kofrim* ['heretics'] because they *kofen* ['deny'] that which is written [in the Torah] . . . and part of this was the matter of the first heretic who was active in the days of Rabbi Yehiel, and like him there were others before him.²⁰

The Jewish protagonist in this second disputation in Paris answered in a similar manner to the one adopted by Rabbi Yehiel in the first disputation, though the existing record indicates that he was not of the same stature. It is interesting to note that according to the Moscow manuscript,

Yeḥiel had demanded, on his deathbed, that what had happened at the disputation that he participated in be set down in writing. Considered opinion held that Yeḥiel left France and emigrated to the Holy Land where he settled in Acre and died in 1268 (like his counterpart, Nahmanides, the Jewish protagonist of the Barcelona Disputation), but recent research has suggested that Yeḥiel died in Paris, probably in 1264.²¹ In any case, this comment indicates the close connection between the first and second Paris Disputation, gives a timeframe for the composition of the text and suggests a possible explanation for why it was put down in writing at that particular juncture—namely, the arrival of Friar Paul in Paris. This introduction to the so-called “second Paris Disputation” again suggests that the Jews have a stock of responses for the claims made by the heretics, referring back to Rabbi Yeḥiel and his encounter with Nicholas Donin, which could be used to undermine Friar Paul’s arguments.

In this context, it is important to note that *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁷ was the first anti-Christian polemical work to be penned in northern France.²² Joseph ben Nathan Official’s family had lived in Senlis for a few generations, but they hailed originally from Narbonne, as indicated in a passage in the aforementioned work, and this connection with Languedoc might well explain the presence of Jacob ben Reuben’s work in the Moscow compilation, as it provided a template and example for Joseph Official when he compiled the *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne*⁷ and his version of the Paris Disputation of 1240.²³

The need for anti-Christian polemical works in northern France implies that the Jewish community felt threatened. While the burning of the Talmud in the 1240s left its mark on the Jewish community, as can be seen from the liturgical poems (*piyyutim*) written in its aftermath, it is noticeable that no polemical works were written at that juncture, nor was it felt necessary to record all that had happened.²⁴ This would seem to suggest that during the 1240s and 1250s, the Jews of France understood that the inquisitorial process against the Talmud was the result of good timing (or bad, depending on your perspective), in that there was a king interested enough to carry out the pope’s orders regarding these Jewish postbiblical texts. Though the pope’s letter was sent to other western-European monarchs, none of them took up the gauntlet nor took any operative steps.²⁵ In other words, this was perceived to be an internal Christian affair into which a number of leading rabbis were drawn against their will, the result of which, sadly for the Jews, was the condemnation and burning of the Talmud. The Jews also managed to avoid

any repetition of this outrage by pleading their case before a different pope, Innocent IV.²⁶

However, it would seem that all this changed in the aftermath of the Barcelona Disputation in 1263, which represented a new departure, both in its very public nature, and in its attempt to use postbiblical sources as proof texts for Christianity.²⁷ The news that Friar Paul, who had the support of Louis IX for his activities in southern France, was making his way to Paris in order to hold another public disputation there must have galvanized the Jewish leadership aware of the damage this sort of public encounter could cause.²⁸ This was very different from the inquisition into the heretical status of the Talmud in 1240. Here was a learned friar, a former Jew, suggesting that the Talmud could be used to prove the truth of Christian dogma. It is my contention that this was the reason for the composition of the Hebrew text presenting what occurred in 1240 as a disputation, and this also helps explain its structure, and why it is so different in form from the Latin account of events in 1240. Joseph ben Nathan Official constructed his fictitious account in a manner similar to that of Nahmanides's account of the Barcelona Disputation, and reinterpreted what happened in the 1240s in light of the current concerns of the Parisian Jewish community in the late 1260s and early 1270s. The emphasis is not on denying the heretical status of the Talmud, but on undermining Christian use of the Oral Law to prove the truth of Christianity. It is an impressive literary composition designed to provide the Jewish community with texts that showed that they had the personnel, knowledge, and ability to overcome their Christian interlocutors.

Nahmanides's account of the disputation in Barcelona is different in many ways from Joseph's account of the events in Paris in 1240, and this is to be expected given the geographical locality, difference in character of the authors, and their educational backgrounds.²⁹ However, there are similarities that suggest that Joseph was inspired by Nahmanides's account, so as to present what happened in Paris in a manner that gave a clear victory to Rabbi Yehiel. Though the Latin reports mention that two rabbis were investigated, Rabbi Yehiel and Rabbi Judah ben David of Melun, the Hebrew account focuses on the disputation between Donin and Yehiel in the same manner that the Barcelona account is focused on the two main protagonists, Friar Paul and Nahmanides. Joseph's composition mentions at the end that Judah was also questioned, but does not go into any detail. This is clearly done to give more authenticity to his account, as it was presumably common knowledge that both rabbis were

interrogated during the original investigation, though what they were asked and how they replied might not have been all that well known. What is also fascinating is that whereas the Latin account of events in Paris does not mention the participation of Nicholas Donin beyond his approach to Pope Gregory IX, the apostate Donin becomes the Christian protagonist of the disputation in the same way that Friar Paul, the former Jew, Saul of Montpellier, is the protagonist of the Barcelona account. Both rabbis face apostates, and both, according to the respective Hebrew accounts, emerge victorious. In addition, Paul was a Dominican, and though the Paris text does not explicitly say that Donin was a mendicant, it gives strong hints that this was the case, and some scholars have suggested that he was a Franciscan.³⁰ Again, written within living memory of the events themselves, this Hebrew text attempts not to veer too far away from what was historically true.

The presentation of events as a disputation is also interesting. The Latin texts, written much closer to the time, show that the questioning of the rabbis was part of the inquisitorial process into the heretical status of the Talmud. There was no disputation; the rabbis were asked specific questions relating to the thirty-five articles in the pope's letter and they replied accordingly. Joseph chooses to portray what happened as a disputation because he was aware of the Nahmanides's text and what occurred in Barcelona in 1263. This format also allowed him, as it did Nahmanides, to give more space to Rabbi Yeḥiel who is then able to ridicule Donin and his knowledge of the Talmud in the same manner that Nahmanides showed Friar Paul's shortcomings and gave detailed replies to the points raised showing why the Christian reading is irrelevant.

A closer look at both texts is also revealing in a number of aspects. The Paris 1240 text opens in a similar manner to the Barcelona 1263 text by trying to show that the whole exercise was pointless. While Nahmanides claims that the Talmud was written hundreds of years after Jesus and, hence, it is clear that the rabbis could not have accepted Jesus's authority or that he was God-incarnate, as Friar Paul claimed that he could prove, Yeḥiel asserts that the Talmud was written fifteen centuries earlier, hence before Jesus's time. He also claimed that Christian fathers, such as St. Jerome, were aware of this corpus and did not feel the need to denounce it.³¹ While the argument in both texts is different, and may depend on different Jewish approaches to rabbinic literature, the outcome is the same: there is no point to the whole disputation because the contents of the Talmud are not relevant to the interpretations being made by the Christian

interlocutors. While this argument is summarily dismissed by both Friar Paul and Nicholas Donin, it already sows seeds of doubt about the relevance of the whole disputation.

Neither Nahmanides nor Yehiel want to participate in the disputation, but both are given guarantees of their safety and freedom of speech as long as they do not say blasphemous things.³² While the language and form is different in both texts—Nahmanides is more assertive in his demands, Yehiel, more hesitant and distrustful of the protection proffered—it reflects, at least in part, the status of the Jews, or at least of their representatives in these different geographical locations. In addition, the rules of engagement are presented as the same and provide the appropriate conditions for Yehiel to develop his arguments in such a way as to undermine and ridicule Donin.³³

One of the most interesting answers in the Paris 1240 text refers to the authority of aggadic texts. Donin's question is very general; he asks whether Yehiel "believes in these four," presumably referring to the four volumes of the Talmud he supposedly had before him. Yehiel's reply goes far beyond the scope of the question, as we would have expected a simple affirmation with perhaps the addition that the Talmud is an integral part of the Torah given to Moses at Sinai and, without it, the Jews cannot interpret or understand the laws found in the Torah. This reply would have directly dealt with one of the essential points raised by Donin in his original thirty-five articles addressed to the pope. Instead, Yehiel responds:

I believe in all the obligations and laws found in them, as we learn "to teach them—that is the Talmud." And it is called Talmud because of the verse "and you shall teach [*ve-limadetem*] your sons." However, they [the four volumes] also include aggadic teachings, which are intended to appeal to the hearts of people to understand deeper things . . . and they include extraordinary things that appeal to the skeptic, heretic, or schismatic [*kofer, apikores ve-min*].³⁴ And I do not have to reply to your points on these matters, for if you want to believe in them, all well and good, and if not, there is no need to believe in them, for no practical decision is made on the basis of these sayings.³⁵

Yehiel is basically denying the parity of the authority of the midrashim found in the Talmud with the halakhic (legalistic) materials. This has to be compared with the comments regarding the aggadah made by Nahmanides at the Barcelona Disputation. Following Friar Paul's citing of a

midrash that seems to indicate that the Messiah must have already come, thus, proving that Jesus was said Messiah, Nahmanides responds: "I do not believe in that aggadah, even though it supports my position."³⁶ Further on in the disputation he explains what he meant:

And now I will explain to you what I meant when I said "I do not believe in it." Know that we have three types of books. The first is the Bible, and we all believe in it totally. And the second is called Talmud and it is a commentary to the commandments of the Torah . . . and we believe in it where it elucidates the commandments of the Torah. There is a third book called midrash, in other words sermons, as if a bishop were to stand up and give a sermon and one of the audience liked it and committed it to writing. And this book, whoever believes it, all well and good.³⁷

The similarity to what Yehiel supposedly said in Paris is clear. In the context of a public disputation with Christians, this is seemingly a very daring thing to have said and has given rise to much discussion as to what Yehiel and Nahmanides meant and whether they actually meant what they said.³⁸ However, Nahmanides's comment about the midrash is clearly tactical and has nothing to do with his actual beliefs, as the aggadah is a central part of his kabbalistic hermeneutics. However, most of the proof texts used by Friar Paul in the disputation were from the aggadic sections of the Talmud, and by denying their efficacy, Nahmanides was pulling the rug out from under Friar Paul's feet. The fact that almost the same rationale appears in the Paris Disputation suggests that Joseph Official was aware of the potency of Nahmanides's argument and has Yehiel say the same thing, thereby showing his Jewish audience how to answer a heretic and apostate. This may also be an indication that when he penned his version of events, Joseph was aware of Friar Paul's imminent arrival in Paris.

Another fascinating aspect of the Paris text is its setting, which mirrors the Barcelona Disputation in interesting ways. Firstly, the fact that the disputation was held in the royal court, as was the case in Barcelona, provides the whole event with an aura of importance and, in the eyes of the Jewish audience, gives extra significance to the clear Jewish victory portrayed in the account.³⁹ Secondly, the presence of the queen, whether she was the king's mother and (temporary) regent, Blanche of Castile, as most scholars have surmised, or Louis IX's wife, Margaret of Provence (d. 1295), is significant.⁴⁰ This, of course, is parallel to the presence of the king of Aragon, James I, who, according to both the Christian version of

events and Nahmanides's account, took an active role in the proceedings. According to the Hebrew text of the Paris encounter, the queen is drawn into the debate in a way similar to the king in Barcelona: She guarantees the safety of Yehiel and the Jews, permits Yehiel not to take an oath as he requested; she is drawn into the interchange by Yehiel when he has a particular point to make and she expresses her amazement at certain junctures.⁴¹ What is, of course, immediately notable is the fact that in Paris, it was the queen who took part in the disputation rather than the king as in Barcelona.⁴² Interestingly, at the end of the disputation, Joseph writes: "and this [the disputation] was held before the king and queen in Paris in the royal court," though the king is not mentioned as being present or as having said anything during the disputation.⁴³ Blanche of Castile died in 1254, before the composition of the Hebrew account, whereas Margaret of Provence died later, in 1295. Joseph seemed to want to mimic the Barcelona account in having royalty not only present but also actively participating in the disputation, but was clearly wary of presenting the king, Louis IX, as having been the main royal protagonist. Though using literary license to invent an episode that did not actually occur, placing the king at its center had its dangers if Christians got hold of the text and scrutinized it; hence, claiming the king's presence at such an important event would not have been wise. However, suggesting that a queen was there, while not specifically naming her, allowed Joseph to give the disputation the aura and gravitas of the one at Barcelona with fewer possible repercussions if the text fell into the wrong hands or if the veracity of the account was questioned.

There can be no doubt that each Hebrew text reflects its different cultural, intellectual, and political environment and, therefore, is very different in the way it addresses the issues that arise in the disputations and how it relates to the people directly involved and the audience present. Nahmanides's text reflects a far greater confidence in his intellectual abilities and his standing with the king, whereas the Paris text reflects the limitations on the Jewish side as a result of the piety of Louis IX who, to a large degree, determined the status of the Jews in the French kingdom.⁴⁴ Yehiel is more hesitant in his answers, clearly more coy with the Christian audience, though forthright in his denigration of Nicholas Donin. The Barcelona text also reflects a very different agenda from that of the Paris one, and the focus on one particular issue (with a couple of diversions)—i.e., whether or not the Messiah has come—gives Nahmanides more freedom in how he develops his replies. The more wide-ranging

exploration and denigration of the Talmud, which was the basis of the inquisitorial process in Paris 1240, means that the development of the argumentation in the account of the disputation is necessarily more textually based, demanding greater exposition of the sources in order to show that the Christian reading is wrong. While Nahmanides can toy with Friar Paul, Joseph Official needs to concentrate on getting Yehiel's hermeneutical readings of the Talmud across to his Jewish readers. As the account of the Paris Disputation proceeds, it becomes less a dialogue and more a monologue; Yehiel's answers get more and more extensive and detailed. Hence, while Joseph Official borrowed the structure and form of Nahmanides's text, he had to focus on the issues particular to the inquisitorial procedure, claims that were clearly well known in Paris, as can be seen from Odo of Chateauroux's *Selections of the Talmud (Extractiones de Talmut)*, compiled during the years 1245–48.⁴⁵

In addition, unlike Nahmanides's text, which caused ripples beyond the Jewish world—when a version translated into Catalan for the bishop of Gerona fell into the hands of the Dominicans and eventually caused its author to have to leave Catalonia for the Holy Land—Joseph's account of the “disputation” was, as far as can be ascertained, written for and read by a Jewish audience only. There are no known repercussions for the author of this text. Joseph's authorship and invention of the disputation, though supposedly with the permission of the central protagonist, Yehiel, as he lay on his deathbed, was to give succor and encouragement to a Jewish community under attack from different quarters. Although the trial against the Talmud and its burning in the 1240s, while traumatic and part of the collective memory of the community, had not been followed by continued pressure and subsequent burnings, nevertheless the piety of King Louis IX and, indeed, his attempts to eradicate Jewish moneylending and the taking of usury, had made life for the Jews more uncomfortable and conversion more attractive.⁴⁶ However, in the late 1260s, the mendicants seem to have mounted a more sustained attack spearheaded by Friar Paul and his supporters, and it is this context that served as the basis for the composition of the account of the invented disputation of 1240.⁴⁷ There was indeed an inquisition against the Talmud in 1240, and Yehiel and Judah were called upon to defend their religious texts, as can be seen from the Christian accounts; however, at the end of the 1260s, Joseph used poetic license and some knowledge of Nahmanides's account of events in Barcelona to provide a text which showed how the Christian use of the Jewish postbiblical texts could be undermined.

Postscript

Following the completion of this article, I received a copy of Judah Galinsky's fascinating study of the Hebrew versions of the Talmud trial, where he makes a strong case for the superiority of the account found in the Moscow manuscript because of the information it contains not found in the Paris manuscript and the standard printed edition that is based on the latter.⁴⁸ He focuses particularly on the introduction and conclusion of the debate, showing how the Moscow manuscript gives a more credible buildup to the disputation and fits better with the Christian report of what happened at the inquisitorial proceedings. There are a number of scenes that start with Rabbi Yehiel arguing his case in front of the king, continuing with the setting-up of the special commission to judge the Talmud, another attempt to get the proceedings canceled, this time by trying to persuade the queen, and ending with the start of the disputation with Donin making his opening remarks.⁴⁹ Galinsky also suggests that the conclusion, in which Rabbi Yehiel gives an upbeat message about how Christian argumentation can be overcome, indicates that it was written before the Talmud was burned.

Galinsky brings to our attention a short fragment from a Vatican manuscript that seems to be an independent version of events and portrays what happened as an inquisitorial proceeding. This piece of evidence, which he is the first to cite in relation to the events of Paris 1240, is fascinating because the title of the fragment reads: "The Responses of Rabbi Yehiel of Paris to Paul the apostate," while the brief fragment itself mentions Donin by name.⁵⁰ Naturally, Rabbi Yehiel was not involved in the later disputation with Friar Paul, but perhaps the title is an indication that Friar Paul, not Donin, was the chief concern and reason for compiling the Hebrew text and presenting it as a disputation. The contents of the short fragment reflect what indeed happened in Paris—i.e., the inquisitorial proceeding, where the rabbi was allowed to answer yes or no to the questions presented to him about the Talmudic text.

In light of my presentation of the composition of the Hebrew text, I would like to suggest that Galinsky's arguments make more sense if the Moscow manuscript, which he claims was also written by Joseph ben Nathan Official, was written later than the version found in the Paris manuscript because the latter is based on what happened in Barcelona in 1263.⁵¹ The way the events are portrayed mirrors the setting of Barcelona and is a reflection of Friar Paul's visit to Paris in the early 1270s. In my opinion,

the Moscow manuscript bears witness to a later stage whereby there is an attempt to harmonize both the Jewish and Christian sources, reworking the former, particularly the introduction, in order to show that both sources refer to the same event. The upbeat ending of the Moscow manuscript perhaps reflects the fact that the Jews managed to persuade Pope Innocent IV not to allow the Talmud to be consigned to the flames again.

8 A Christianized Sephardic Critique of Rashi's *Peshaṭ* in Pablo de Santa María's *Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra*

Yosi Yisraeli

Solomon Halevi of Burgos, or Pablo de Santa María (c. 1352–1435), is certainly one of modern historiography's most famous Jewish converts to Christianity. His radical transformation from a rabbi and a Jewish scholar in his late thirties into a Christian priest, a high-ranking advisor at the Iberian courts, and eventually the bishop of Burgos, has turned him into a symbol of the sudden Jewish breakdown and the rise of the converso class in the Iberian Peninsula after the 1391 riots.¹ However, for a wide circle of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Christian scholars, the converted bishop was first of all known as the writer of the *Additiones* (*Additions*) to the *Postilla litteralis* (*Literal Postilla*), an extensive collection of many hundreds of supplements to the famous literal-sense commentaries of the Franciscan friar Nicholas de Lyra (c. 1270–1349)—the champion of literal interpretation of the Bible in the Middle Ages.² In fact, during the fifteenth century, the *Additiones* achieved such massive circulation and tremendous popularity that it almost became complementary to the printed editions of the *Postilla*.³ Yet, for various reasons, the *Additiones* has not been studied systematically or thoroughly, and thus the true value of this unique product of interreligious and cross-cultural scholarship has yet to be fully discovered and appreciated. In the following pages, I will present a few preliminary findings from my research into this extensive work and suggest a new perspective on one of the bishop's most applauded achievements—his hermeneutical theories.

Scholars of medieval exegesis have long identified the massive theoretical prologue of the *Additiones* (that was eventually even printed in

the *Patrologia Latina*) as a significant link in the history of medieval biblical hermeneutics on account of its popularity and sophistication.⁴ The prologue that was designed as a kind of scholastic quodlibet discussed the proposition “whether the literal sense is more worthy (*dignior*) than the other senses,” and addressed the urgent concerns that occupied Christian theologians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with regard to the “true nature” and boundaries of the *sensus litteralis*. The problem was that for two centuries Christian exegesis had pulled the literal sense in what seemed to be two opposing directions: On the one hand, the literal sense included increasing scientific attention to the textual and contextual features of the scripture, but on the other hand, its boundaries were expanded in order to include more and more parabolic, allegorical, and typological meanings that were once considered part of the spiritual sense.⁵

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, this exegetical tension was inflated into a full “hermeneutic crisis” through the turbulence of ecclesiastical schisms, heresies and conflicts.⁶ The prologue to the *Additiones* aimed to present Pablo’s solution to this hermeneutical bafflement, and scholars of this field have struggled to integrate the bishop’s positions into the general narrative of late medieval hermeneutics, sometimes in contradictory ways.⁷ Yet, I suspect that this focus on the prologue’s thicket of scholastic arguments and counterarguments has distracted scholarly attention from other crucial elements in Pablo’s approach to biblical hermeneutics, and especially from certain elements that drew from his particular Jewish education. Therefore, despite its great importance, I shall relinquish here the theoretical discussion of the prologue and instead point to a different aspect of Pablo’s commentaries in an attempt to offer a glimpse at the peculiar and distinctive concerns that shaped the bishop’s Judeo-Christian hermeneutic horizon.

Undermining Lyra’s Literal Sense and Its Jewish Origins

Although the *Additiones* followed and complemented the *Postilla litteralis*, it was not aimed to serve as a supercommentary (a commentary on a previous commentary). Pablo by no means strove to explain Lyra’s work, but rather to pose an alternative to it. In fact, it was a staggeringly confrontational alternative that questioned the Franciscan master’s basic skills, and at times even subverted Christian biblical scholarship at large.⁸ The exegetical confrontation that Pablo initiated revolved around several

key theological and linguistic themes. One of these themes was the question pertaining to the literal sense, the explanations it may incorporate, and how one could choose between them. Hence, Pablo's preoccupation with the theories or structure of biblical hermeneutics was not confined to his prologue alone, but was woven into many of his commentaries across the *Biblia*. These discussions, in which Pablo criticized the basic hermeneutic categories used by Lyra, included a variety of methodological arguments. Among these, one may identify a substantial cluster of *additiones* that present a similar pattern of challenges to Lyra's categorization of the literal sense.

One very short example of this pattern can be found in the *additio* to Genesis Chapter 8 that tells of Noah and the flood. In his *Postilla litteralis*, Lyra commented on verse 5 of this chapter (that describes the retreating water in the aftermath of the flood), that he could calculate according to the dates and the measurements provided in scripture which part of the bottom of the Ark lay beneath the surface of the water—i.e., the draft of the Ark. According to the calculation offered by Lyra, the draft was either thirteen or nine cubits long.

Although at a first glance there was nothing particularly controversial in Lyra's calculation, Pablo evidently found it disturbing, and in his *additio* he offered the following response:

The inquiry into which part of the Ark was beneath the water at the time of the flood seems more *curiosum* than useful, for not only does this matter not bear any useful knowledge of what we should believe or how we should behave, but it is not even required for the plain [*planam*] explanation of the letter. For to which extent the Ark was beneath the water, be it more or less, does not change anything about the literal interpretation. . . . Therefore, our *Glossa* does not address this matter, and nor do, I believe, any of our sacred doctors or those of the Jews, with the exception of Rashi, who discussed this empty issue in great length *per modum quaestionis*. However, even if this inquiry had been of some value, it still seems that Lyra's arguments would have no validity.⁹

In this *additio* Pablo dismissed the fundamental relevancy of Lyra's calculation to the literal sense. He did so by indicating that the Franciscan's commentary failed to meet two criteria. Firstly, it added nothing to the understanding of "in what to believe" or "how to behave." By these terms Pablo meant that Lyra's interpretation did not enrich the literal sense with any additional spiritual meaning, either analogical (in what to believe)

or moral (how to act).¹⁰ Therefore, even according to an “expanded” theological definition of the literal sense that includes further spiritual meanings—a hermeneutical technique that Pablo acknowledged as plausible—this interpretation of Lyra could not be justified as a *sensus litteralis*.¹¹

Pablo then presented a second criterion, a textual one, arguing that Lyra’s explanation lacked an essential affinity to the “plain” explanation of the letter, and hence did not belong with the *expositio litterae*. By this argument Pablo alluded to the close adherence of the *sensus litteralis* to the bare letter. The term “plain explanation” recurred throughout Pablo’s commentaries and was set in his prologue as a methodological key for measuring the proper literal sense. The priority of a “plain explanation,” Pablo argued, was established by Augustine, who wrote in his *De doctrina Christiana* that doubts pertaining to ambiguous passages should be settled with reliance on plainer (*planior*) passages in the scripture.¹² According to Pablo, Augustine referred to passages that were textually “plainer,” and thus instructed that the preferred literal interpretation is that which “accords” most with the letter.¹³ But in what manner did Lyra’s calculation not agree with the letter? Pablo did not specify.

This may have been a peculiar objection in the eyes of Pablo’s contemporaries, since Lyra’s calculation did not seem to reach beyond the kind of questions that occupied Christian interpreters.¹⁴ Celebrated Christian commentators, from Origen to Hugh of St. Victor, were preoccupied with material descriptions of the Ark, including calculations of its measurements, geometrical shape, and nautical capabilities.¹⁵ In fact, Lyra himself had made several references to these questions in his commentary to Chapter 6, and Pablo did not object to them categorically. What, then, did Pablo find so troubling about this particular interpretation? Why did he believe that this curiosity, as opposed to that of others, had to be condemned as “non literal”?

The answer is related to the second point introduced in this *additio* to Genesis 8: the Jewish origins of Lyra’s commentary. Following his categorical rejection of Lyra’s calculation, Pablo insinuated that the Franciscan’s opinion was founded on the work of the Jewish commentator Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yizḥaki of Troyes), who was the only one who had discussed this “empty issue” at great length and *per modum quaestionis*.¹⁶ Lyra himself did not admit the use of any Jewish sources in this particular interpretation and it was only Pablo who brought up Rashi’s commentary, which indeed included a very similar calculation of the Ark’s

draft. The practice of naming Rashi as Lyra's source recurred across the *Additiones*, revealing to its Latin readers that the Franciscan friar quoted "Rabbi Solomon" (Rashi) far more extensively than he was willing or able to admit. By exposing Rashi as the hidden source of Lyra's commentary, Pablo displayed his superior knowledge of Jewish literature, but even more importantly, he established a close congruence between the methodologies applied by Lyra and those used by Rashi. The significance of this congruence becomes apparent as the argument against Lyra's "empty calculation" unfolds.

Despite his categorical critique against the calculation of the draft, Pablo nevertheless decided to argue with the actual computations that Lyra conducted. On the ground of several scriptural, metrological, and scientific objections, he wanted to show that Lyra's estimates "were invalid." The contradiction between Pablo's determined criticism of the relevance of the draft's calculation to the literal sense on the one hand, and his own engagement with its "technical" details on the other, is so stark that he felt it required explanation. Thus he asserted the following in conclusion to this *additio*: "And if one shall say: If the question is more *curiosa* than useful (as I said), why did I include this discussion? It should be answered that I addressed this question simply in order to show the absurdity of Rashi's commentaries on the sacred scripture, despite the fact that Lyra referred to him frequently."¹⁷ Hence, the root of the problem with Lyra's commentary was Rashi. For not only were Rashi's commentaries, to which Lyra so often referred, inadequate as literal explanations, but they were also fraught with errors and absurdities that reflected his deficient scholarship.

In this respect, the *additio* to Genesis 8 is not at all exceptional. It faithfully reflected a common pattern in the *Additiones*, in which Pablo's concern with and treatment of the literal sense corresponded to his condemnation of Lyra's Jewish sources, i.e., of Rashi. Yet, this brings us once more to the question: Why was Pablo so resentful of Rashi, and why did he condemn his interpretations as particularly nonliteral?

In his monumental *History of the Jews*, the nineteenth-century scholar Zvi Heinrich Graetz suggested that Pablo had treated Rashi with marked contention because of his hatred of anything Jewish.¹⁸ Such passionate judgments have become less acceptable over the past few decades, but the general idea that Pablo's work (and the *Additiones* in particular) reflected zealous antirabbinic sentiment has certainly not "gone out of style" in modern scholarship.¹⁹

I wish to suggest a completely different explanation: Like many other aspects of his Christian thought, Pablo's criticism of Rashi's (and Lyra's) exegetical methods was founded not on anti-Jewish sentiment, but rather on a competing Jewish exegetical and intellectual model.²⁰ His frequent refutations of the French rabbi's commentaries did not reflect a general discontent with rabbinic interpretations, but rather conveyed a rabbinic objection to Rashi's exegetical methodologies that simply could not be considered as *peshat*, i.e., plain-sense commentaries.

The Sephardic Critiques of Rashi's *Peshat* Commentaries

In his prologue to the *Postilla litteralis*, Nicholas de Lyra declared that in order to illuminate the literal meaning of the scripture he would occasionally refer to the opinion of Rabbi Solomon "who among all the Jewish exegetes has put forward the most reasonable arguments."²¹ This statement, followed by an intensive use of Rashi's commentaries, enfolded two stereotypical presuppositions. The first of these conjectures was that the Jewish interpretation of scripture reflected the literal or historical meaning of the text. The second was that Rashi was the highest and almost exclusive Jewish authority on this literal sense.²² These assumptions could have appealed to different Christian circles, but any Iberian Jewish scholar of the fourteenth or fifteenth century may have contested them with great ease and argued that the Jews did not interpret scripture only according to the letter, and that Rashi, despite his tremendous popularity and prestige, was not the leading authority on such literal matters. According to some, he was hardly an authority at all. Pablo, who was raised and educated in a circle of north Iberian scholars who took great pride in its unique intellectual heritage, argued precisely that.²³

In fact, already in his prologue, as Pablo briefly listed the three main failures of the *Postilla* that had motivated him to write his commentaries, he refuted Lyra's perception of Rashi and noted it was in stark opposition to the "true opinion" of the Jews:

For although they [the Jews] think of him [Rashi] as a solemn teacher of the Talmud, this [esteem] does not pertain to his interpretation of the scripture and of the faith. For among them there are others who are considered greater and more solemn in these interpretations, such as Maimonides, Nahmanides, Ibn Ezra, and others as shall be seen.²⁴

Thus, in Pablo's opinion, one of the *Postilla's* main insufficiencies (in addition to Lyra's poor Hebrew and disrespect of Thomas Aquinas) was that it assumed and presented an entirely distorted picture of Jewish scholarship. Despite what Lyra and many Christians believed, the Jews did not consider Rashi as the leading biblical commentator on the literal sense. He was indeed a solemn "doctor" of the Talmud, but this did not necessarily imply that he was a biblical or theological authority of the magnitude of Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, or Nahmanides—scholars who were hardly mentioned in Lyra's *Postilla*.²⁵

Of course, Lyra and other Christian Hebraists did not invent Rashi's literalist authority. By this time the Jewish *peshaṭ* commentaries had come to represent something similar to the literal sense and Rashi was famously known, surely in Lyra's French environment, as a master of this exegetical method. After all, according to his own famous statement, he wished "only to [explain] the plain sense of scripture."²⁶ Yet today we are more aware of the fact that Rashi's eleventh-century concept of *peshaṭ* commentary was still remote from a purely literal category of interpretation. Although the word *peshaṭ*, in different conjugations and contiguities, already appeared in Talmudic literature, it hardly presented a coherent methodology of biblical interpretation and did certainly not resemble a "literal sense" or even a contradictory framework to the *derash* (homiletic interpretation characteristic of Talmudic literature).²⁷ The early development of an exegetical category, distinguished from *derash* by its commitment to a systematic contextual, literal, or grammatical reading of the text evolved under Islamic influence in the works of the Ge'onim and the Karaites of the ninth and tenth century, probably in the footsteps of parallel Arabic concepts.²⁸ However, only in Northern Europe did the term *peshaṭ* become most distinctly identified with the concept of such literal inquiry when it was introduced by Rashi in the eleventh century.²⁹ To what degree Rashi's emerging concept of a *peshaṭ* commentary was influenced by his Sephardic predecessors and to what degree it evolved from a dialogue with his Christian neighbors in northern France is a question still open to debate.³⁰ In either case, it appears that Rashi's concept of *peshaṭ* and its categorical division from *derash* was not yet entirely formulated.³¹

This puzzling mixture of *derash* and *peshaṭ* in Rashi's commentaries has been a source of rigorous discussion among modern scholars.³² However more importantly, these methodological "flaws" were already noted in the Middle Ages. Even Rashi's pupils acknowledged that his *peshaṭ*

commentary required modification.³³ Yet, the most pungent and systematic critiques against it emerged in Sephardic circles that already adhered to a much more sophisticated literal tradition.³⁴ The first and most famous of these critics was the great twelfth-century commentator, grammarian, and astronomer, Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1164). For “the Sephardic Abraham” (as Ibn Ezra referred to himself), who followed in the path of the great Jewish commentators and grammarians of the Muslim world, *peshat* interpretation had to be founded on two essential components: grammar and logic (that included science and philosophy).³⁵ In Rashi's eleventh-century northern France, none of these disciplines was well developed, if at all familiar. Hence, it was almost inevitable that Ibn Ezra, who gained proficiency in Rashi's work during his travels through Christian Europe, would think very little of Rabbi Solomon's *peshat* commentaries. Indeed, in his own biblical interpretation, Ibn Ezra rejected the exegetical methodology he found in “the lands of the Greeks and the Edomites,” i.e., in Christian Europe.³⁶ He strongly rejected the possibility that the midrashic interpretation of the sages aimed to guide or serve as *peshat* commentaries, and for that reason he explicitly dismissed Rashi's exegetical practices in his grammar book *Safa berurah* (*Clear language*):

[Our ancient sages of blessed memory] set the rule that “scripture never departs from its plain sense [*peshuto*],” and that *derash* [homilies] have only added value. Only the following generations turned *derash* into the principle and the root, as did Rashi who interpreted the scripture in the way of the *derash*, while believing it was the way of the *peshat*. However, only one out of a thousand of Rashi's commentaries was *peshat*.³⁷

Thus, Rashi was the best example Ibn Ezra could offer in his efforts to illustrate the poor state of the *peshat* commentaries produced by his medieval contemporaries who were insufficiently learned in grammar. Rashi, argued Ibn Ezra, did not produce *peshat* commentaries, but was mostly reciting the *derash* of the sages that had no exegetical authority. Accordingly, Aharon Mondshine found that many of Ibn Ezra's biblical commentaries aimed to refute the midrashic interpretation that Rashi presented as *peshat*.³⁸

The exegetical “rivalry” between Ibn Ezra and Rashi deepened during the thirteenth century in the wake of a much more dramatic schism in the Jewish world—the Maimonidean controversies over the study and authority of philosophy.³⁹ For the adversaries of philosophy, Rashi served as the preferred biblical authority and as a model of proper Jewish

scholarship. On the other hand, Maimonidean scholars often betrayed an anti-Rashi tone and instead “canonized” Ibn Ezra’s commentaries as the fundamental exegetical texts for the education of Jewish philosophers.⁴⁰ However, this did not mean that one had to be a radical Maimonidean or entirely hostile to Rashi in order to recognize the deficiencies in the latter’s commentaries.

The most significant example of this critical awareness could be found in the work of another pillar of medieval Jewish Sephardic thought—Nahmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Naḥman, c. 1194–1270).⁴¹ As a biblical commentator, Nahmanides is most famously known for his introduction of a new mystical hermeneutic level, “the way of the truth.”⁴² Nevertheless, while the intriguing kabbalistic interpretations (which he declared as his prime object) were his most notable innovation in the field, the overwhelming majority of his exegetical work was dedicated to *peshaṭ* interpretation, enriched with new levels of literal sophistication and acuteness.⁴³ In these *peshaṭ* commentaries, Nahmanides offered ample quotations of Rashi, and for many years these references were read as a sign of admiration. Yet, as Bernard Septimus noted in his important article from 1983, Nahmanides’s concept of *peshaṭ* was far more indebted to Andalusian linguistic sensitivities and philology than was formerly realized.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Nahmanides had his own well-known reservations about the authority of the aggadic midrash.⁴⁵ Therefore, in innumerable instances, Nahmanides privileged Ibn Ezra’s grammatical explanations over Rashi’s midrashic ones. These pieces of evidence led Septimus to suggest (in one of his footnotes) that: “Nahmanides’ commentary is, among other things, a sustained critique of Rashi’s more midrashic interpretations of scripture. Although this criticism never approached the harsh language occasionally directed at Ibn Ezra, it seems more fundamental and thoroughgoing than the critique of Ibn Ezra.”⁴⁶ In other words, a close reading of Nahmanides reveals that he often quoted Rashi only in order to undermine the latter’s practice of *peshaṭ* commentary.⁴⁷ Thus, while Nahmanides certainly admired Rashi as a Talmudist and as Jewish scholar in general, he was nonetheless critical of the latter’s biblical commentary—and particularly of his *peshaṭ*.

The criticism expressed by great biblical authorities such as Ibn Ezra and Nahmanides did not prevent Rashi’s commentaries from penetrating into the south and east of the Mediterranean and eventually becoming the most popular biblical commentary across the Jewish world. Yet, a certain Sephardic tone of discontent with Rashi’s biblical scholarship,

and particularly his understanding of the *peshat*, prevailed in Pablo's time.⁴⁸ For example, Moses ben Shem Tov Gabba'i of Aragon, who wrote a supercommentary on Rashi called *Eved Shelomo* (*Servant of Solomon*, from 1422), testified in his prologue that he had come across people who disregard Rashi's commentary and claimed that it was filled with fables and homilies, that Rashi was not well versed in grammar, and that his commentaries were by no means *peshat*.⁴⁹ No less explicit and pungent was the author of the treatise *Alilot devarim* that was written between the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth century as a vitriolic self-critique against rabbinic scholarship and leadership.⁵⁰ The anonymous writer ridiculed Rashi's biblical commentaries that "blinded the eyes of the righteous, threw them in chains and brought upon them confusion, since most of his sayings are not interpretations at all, but Talmudic homilies" that were never intended to serve as the plain sense of scripture.⁵¹ But even this ruthless detractor had to admit Rashi's remarkable Talmudic scholarship, which may bring to mind Pablo's distinction between Rashi the Talmudist and Rashi the biblical scholar—a distinction that Pablo also maintained in his polemical dialogue, the *Scrutinium scripturarum* (*Scrutiny of Scriptures*).⁵² Traces of such similar distinction may also be found in the specific circle of Jewish scholars that surrounded Pablo de Santa María prior to his conversion. In his grammar book *Ma'ase Efod* (*The Work of Efod*, from 1403), Pablo's contemporary and personal acquaintance, Profiat Duran, pronounced Rashi the "the Crown of Glory of Talmudic scholars."⁵³ Rashi's biblical commentaries received only moderate compliments, such as "fine" and "pleasant," and were deemed useful for a less-educated audience.⁵⁴ In another passage Duran reckoned that Rashi's commentaries were mostly "borrowed from the homilies of the sages in the way of the *derash*," and in blatant contrast praised the innovations of "the Crown Glory of Torah scholars"—Nahmanides.⁵⁵ Hence, respectful as Duran was toward Rashi, he was still in line with the aforementioned Sephardic critiques of Rashi's *peshat* exegesis, and praised him mostly as a Talmudist.⁵⁶ In that same spirit, Eric Lawee recently suggested that upon close examination the supercommentaries on Rashi that appeared in the fifteenth-century Sephardic world (some very near to Pablo de Santa María's circle of activity) betray not only the French rabbi's increasing popularity, but also the persistent criticism against his methodology. At various points, these supercommentaries highlighted the estrangement of their authors from the literal sense of Rashi's interpretation "while camouflaging their subversion of it." Thus in practice, "through the medium

of supercommentary, Spanish challenges to Rashi's interpretation were read back into his work."⁵⁷

It therefore appears that the *Additiones's* critical attitude toward Rashi was not driven by antirabbinic zeal, but rather reflected certain Sephardic resentment of the French rabbi's biblical scholarship. As Pablo de Santa María discovered, the same commentaries that were rejected by his esteemed Jewish masters as linguistically inferior and unworthy as *peshaṭ* readings had become embedded in one of the most respected, popular and authoritative literal commentaries of the Christian world.

The Nahmanides-Pablo Critique of the Rashi-Lyra Commentary

Seemingly, Northern European Christian Hebraists conveyed a distorted and somewhat Franco-centric representation of Jewish scholarship. In response, the converted bishop of Burgos was determined to reclaim the biblical authority of the truly "solemn" Jewish scholars, who happened to be of Sephardic origins: Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, and Nahmanides. Systematic readers of the *Additiones* will only come across each of these names on approximately twenty different occasions. But in practice, Pablo's dependency on them was far greater than his explicit references betray. In addition to these explicit references, the *Additiones* contained a further flood of allusions to rabbinic ideas and patterns of interpretation that were not presented or openly acknowledged as such. Nahmanides was probably the most dominant among these hidden rabbinic sources. In fact, the converted bishop paraphrased Nahmanides in so many of his *additiones* to the Pentateuch that he could be considered a follower of Rabbi Moses of Gerona on a variety of theological and exegetical questions. One of these questions was the exegetical critique of Rashi's *peshaṭ* that had become prevalent as Lyra's literal sense. In order to see how closely Pablo followed Nahmanides on this matter, and how the "sustained critique" of Nahmanides (and occasionally also that of Ibn Ezra) could serve as the key to understanding some of Pablo's hermeneutic criticism of Lyra, we shall return to the example of Genesis Chapter 8.

As mentioned, Pablo criticized Lyra for borrowing from Rashi a calculation of the Ark's draft that had nothing to do with the literal sense or with the plain meaning of the letter, and was also scientifically erroneous. It should be compared to Nahmanides's commentary on verse 4 of that chapter:

On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the Ark came to rest on one of the mountains of Ararat—Rashi wrote that one may learn, according to his calculation, that eleven cubits of the Ark were beneath the water. This [calculation] also appears in midrash *Bereshit Rabbah*, but since in certain passages, Rashi punctiliously follows the aggadic midrash and takes the trouble to explain the plain sense of scripture [according to the midrash], allow us to do the same, for there are seventy faces to the Torah and the sages offer many contradictory midrashim. Thus, I believe that the calculation they offer is not proper according to the written text.⁵⁸

Nahmanides began his explanation of verse 4 by referring to Rashi's calculation—the same one that would later be borrowed by Lyra. Yet, Nahmanides did not mention Rashi's opinion in order to embrace it. He rather mentioned it to inform his readers that Rashi's explanation was founded on a midrash from the aggadic compilation of Genesis, *Bereshit Rabbah*, a source that Rashi himself had never admitted.⁵⁹ In this remark, Nahmanides not only exposed Rashi's hidden source, but also illustrated that Rashi's entire interpretation was an adaptation of a midrash, thus implying that it stood in some contrast to the *peshat*. Nahmanides then added, in an obvious tone of bewilderment, that Rashi used an aggadic midrash as the platform for his *peshat* explanation, leaving no doubt that he found in this case a contradiction between different hermeneutical methods, the *derash* and the *peshat*. But Nahmanides did not settle for this implied methodological criticism and added that even if one did follow Rashi's peculiar methodological presuppositions, which allowed a *peshat* explanation to be based on an aggadic midrash, the actual calculation that was applied by the midrash and Rashi would be invalid. He then listed several concrete objections to this calculation, including an argument that Pablo would later use—that the water did not retreat from an equal part of land each day. Only after Nahmanides had disproved Rashi's calculation did he begin a new passage in which a completely different explanation of the verse was offered, introduced as “by way of the *peshat*.”⁶⁰ At this point, it is clear that Nahmanides wished to set a contrast between Rashi's alleged *peshat* commentary, which he rejected both for its midrashic origins and its failed calculations, and his own *peshat* alternative.

Hence Pablo's reaction to the interpretation offered in the *Postilla* was in fact a close reformulation—on certain points almost a translation—of the Nahmanidian argument against Rashi's commentary. First of all, both Nahmanides and Pablo phrased their commentaries in response to

Rashi. For that purpose Pablo had to reveal that Lyra's interpretation was founded on Rashi's commentary—a strategy that somewhat resembled the manner in which Nahmanides had exposed Rashi's midrashic sources. Secondly, just as Nahmanides had claimed that Rashi did not apply the proper method of *peshaṭ*, Pablo argued that the Rashi-Lyra interpretation could not be considered as literal sense. Pablo especially noted that Lyra's interpretation did not pertain to the "plain" understanding of the text, a term that in this context seems parallel to the Hebrew *peshaṭ*. Thirdly, Pablo's remark that Rashi's interpretation was *per modum quaestionis* appears like a paraphrase of the spiteful Nahmanidian assertion that Rashi "meticulously inquired" into the meaning of the scripture following the aggadic midrash. Fourthly, although Pablo claimed it to be methodologically inappropriate, he insisted, just like Nahmanides, on refuting the actual calculation presented by the Rashi-Lyra interpretation in order to prove its scientific and scriptural negligence.

As we read the *Additiones* against the commentaries of Nahmanides, the exegetical impetus behind a large part of Pablo's hermeneutic criticism of Lyra becomes clear: Pablo knew that Lyra's literal interpretation was in fact drawn, via Rashi, from midrashic fables. Despite what Lyra assumed, Rashi's *peshaṭ* commentary was hardly guided by the famous Jewish literalism.

The close correlation between Pablo's criticism of Lyra's literal sense and Nahmanides's commentary was by no means exceptional or unique to the *additio* of Genesis 8. Dozens of further examples attest that an important part of Pablo's assault on Lyra's literal sense was an extension of Jewish criticism (mostly that of Nahmanides, but occasionally also that of Ibn Ezra) of Rashi's *peshaṭ* exegesis.

Equipped with thorough rabbinic education, Pablo de Santa María easily recognized that the celebrated *Postilla litteralis* had drawn on Rashi's commentaries far more intensively than its author admitted to his readers. But as a well-established Sephardic scholar, Pablo was also aware that many of Rashi's commentaries were based on midrashic legends rather than on textual scrutiny of the scripture, a fact that Lyra did not fully realize since Rashi often embedded or paraphrased the midrashic legends without any acknowledgment. Thus, from Pablo's new perspective as a Christian theologian, it was clear that turning these Rashi commentaries into Christian literal interpretations was nothing but absurd. While Lyra pretended to provide Christian readers with literal explanations that

would benefit from the famous Jewish expertise and adherence to the letter, grammar, and historical context of the scripture, he was in fact hermeneutically guided by the same Talmudic fables that Christians repeatedly condemned as fictional and superstitious.⁶¹

Thus it appears, somewhat remarkably, that at least one central axis of Pablo's hermeneutic criticism in the *Additiones* was a matrix of Jewish-Christian exegetical reflections, even if only partially visible to the Latin reader. This finding may demonstrate that the converted bishop's profound Jewish training and education never ceased to play a major role in his theological thought, even after his baptism. Pablo's command of rabbinic literature and his Hebraic linguistic expertise were unparalleled among Christian scholars, and his mastery of Christian theology was unprecedented for a Jewish convert. It is doubtful whether there was another medieval scholar as capable and motivated to weave these two scholarly traditions together. In this broad sense, Pablo's contribution to the development of fifteenth-century Christian Hebraism, in its different branches, has yet to be uncovered. But specifically with regard to the *Additiones*, we may conclude that it was not only a channel for transmitting Jewish philological, historical, and mystical knowledge but also hermeneutical theories and conventions. The Sephardic concepts of *peshat* that Pablo professed as a Jewish biblical scholar had their own range of literal flexibilities, and most importantly, they were not ontologically or theologically tied to a parallel spiritual sense, as was often the case with the Christian *sensus litteralis*. The fact that Pablo was still thinking, at least on some level, in Jewish hermeneutical terms may open new possibilities for understanding his seemingly ambiguous and complicated theories about the structure of the senses and their impact on his fifteenth-century Christian readers.⁶²

9 Jewish and Christian Interpretations in Arragel's Biblical Glosses

Ángel Sáenz-Badillos

As is well known, in 1422 the Maestre de Calatrava, D. Luis de Guzmán, commissioned Rabbi Moses Arragel to make a new translation of the Bible with a commentary presenting side by side the views of Jewish and Christian interpreters.¹ The rabbi was well versed in Jewish exegesis, and the Christian interpretations would be provided to him by the friars designated by the Maestre. As Arragel explains, in Toledo, Fray Arias gave him the first *registros* (written notes) with Christian interpretations on Genesis. He also received additional Christian materials for the other biblical books, but it seems that the notes for these books were not so detailed, and referred only to some disputed passages.² Apparently, most of the *registros* that he received from the friars included Christian interpretations on the passages where Jews and Christians had opposing viewpoints related to literal or allegorical exegesis, the Old and New Law, the Trinity, the birth of the Messiah, the role of the Virgin Mary, original sin, baptism, the resurrection of Jesus, status of the dead before the end of time, and particular eschatological questions, including the battle against the “Ante Christo” in the final days.³

Arragel's glosses were not a conventional biblical commentary. In accordance with the mission that he received, he did not need to express his own interpretation, but only to collect the opinions of Jewish and Christian exegetes. His Jewish information was generally based on Rashi and some midrashim (e.g., *Bereshit* [Genesis] *Rabbah* for the first book of the Bible). It also included opinions from other Jewish interpreters, like Abraham ibn Ezra, David Qimḥi, Nahmanides, Jacob ben Asher, Baḥya ben Asher, Maimonides, and Gersonides. Besides these Jewish exegetes, Arragel quoted Christian interpreters, like Nicolas de Lyra,⁴ or “[a] mi amigo maestre Ferrando, delos frayres menores,”⁵ “Maestre Alfon” (prob-

ably Abner of Burgos / Alfonso of Valladolid),⁶ and “Maestre Enrrique.”⁷ Of course, he also mentioned “Sant Geronimo” (with some critical commentaries on his translations).⁸ He sometimes presented the opinion of a Jewish and a Christian exegete together: for instance, Rashi and Maestre Alfon.⁹ But in most cases, he did not provide concrete names of the exegetes, just underscoring the differences between “los latinos” and “los ebraicos.”

From the prologue to the commentaries on difficult passages, Arragel presented, in an objective way, the opinions of Jewish and Christian exegetes. He maintained an irenic disposition, without polemics or apologetic discourse. He did not try to decide who was right, leaving this to theologians. And he emphasized that each person should believe what his religious community (*egleja*) said.¹⁰ For example, commenting on Genesis 3:17, Arragel alludes to the Christian doctrine of original sin in a rather diplomatic way—many ask: Although Adam sinned, why should his descendants be punished? And he answers simply: Theologians should answer this question.¹¹ This attitude shows the rabbi's respect and his nonbelligerent way of dealing with theological discrepancies between both communities. When he finished his work, following the instructions of the Maestre, he put it in the hands of the friars to revise the writing and forward it to the copyists. During this process Arragel could not control Christian materials that were introduced into his work.

Let us analyze in more detail some Jewish and Christian ideas found in the glosses.

Jewish-Only Interpretations

In most cases, when the biblical passages were not very important from the point of view of religious dialogue or discrepancies, Arragel wrote in his gloss only the Jewish interpretation taken from one or various Jewish sources. This is the case in at least 80 percent of his glosses. In more-complex cases, Arragel included different opinions about the biblical passage, representing the point of view of several Jewish exegetes, as he himself said. For example, in the gloss to Exodus 23:20, the rabbi collects different Jewish interpretations, commenting to the Maestre that they are numerous and very different, and he states with his typically open mind that some of them or even all of them could be right.¹²

In most cases we cannot easily recognize the personal contribution of Arragel beyond his sources. But there are exceptions. Sometimes he

added clarifying explanations and philosophical or ethical commentaries. At other times, he organized diverse opinions, without following a Jewish exegete in a servile way. For instance, commenting on the passage of the rock of Meriba, in Numbers 20:1, he wrote a long and well-organized explanation, mentioning the consequences of the death of a just person (Myriam), the rebellion of the Israelites, and the angry answer of Moses. He posed the most important questions on the passage and underlined the different opinions of the exegetes about Moses's mistake. Nothing is said about the Jewish or Christian character of these interpretations, but they did not have any particular Christian tone.¹³

Sometimes he mentioned concrete Jewish interpretations that deserved an explanation, as in Genesis 24:64, the passage about Rebecca dismounting from a camel. Some Jews say that she lost her virginity and that her blood was covered by a deer and a dove. Arragel commented that this was just a figurative, midrashic interpretation (*manera de sermonista*), and that even Jews do not believe it.¹⁴

Two Interpretations: Jewish vs. Christian Points of View

In a significant number of passages, his gloss included two different explanations: one Jewish and one Christian. For instance, in the gloss to Genesis 28:11, he mentioned first the opinion of the Talmudists and then the Trinitarian interpretation of Maestre Alfon.¹⁵ In some cases, the point of view of the Christian exegetes was introduced only with the words, "otros dicen," but it is clear enough: For instance, the gloss to Genesis 36:31 mentioned the opinion of "others" that see a reference to the coming of the Christian Messiah.¹⁶

In some cases he explained in detail the different opinions of Jewish and Christian interpreters. For instance, the long explanation of the episode of the bronze snake (beginning at Numbers 21:4)¹⁷ included different points of view. For the Jews, they had to remember to kill sins, not serpents, and that they should adore only God.¹⁸ But the "latinos" saw in it a great secret: a help toward faith in Jesus whose passion and death would forgive original sin.¹⁹ In this case, it is very likely that Arragel literally reproduced written notes from one of his Christian informers, since the opinion was written in a direct style in the first-person plural. Moreover, it was conveyed in an apologetic way that was not usual in Arragel's words, with a direct allusion to the Jews' criticism of the Christians concerning statues in churches.²⁰

In other cases where he mentioned the differences between “los latinos” and “los judios” (as in the gloss to Genesis 42:38), Arragel presented the interpretation of his Christian informers, noting how this was different from the Jewish perspective. In this case he attributed the discrepancy to the different ways of translating certain Hebrew words: Jerome translated “infierno” (hell), while the Jews preferred “fuesa” (grave).²¹ But, instead of exaggerating the discrepancies, in the gloss to Genesis 44:29 he concluded that since neither the Christians nor the Jews mention the soul in their interpretation of this verse, the glosses identifying “hell” and “grave” can be understood as reflecting a similar understanding: just a place for the corpse.²² In the gloss to Genesis 14:15, “pursuing them as far as Hobah,” a long explanation on Melchizedek included Jewish and Christian materials. There are several Jewish interpretations of the passage, including a reference to the relationship of Jerusalem to the tenth of the kabbalistic *sefirot*. The Christian interpretation was introduced by an allusion to the need to believe what the *egleja* believes, linking the character of Melchizedek as “king of justice” with Jesus.²³ Christian exegetes think that the Jews are wrong in their interpretation of the passage, since the cult of the Old Law was replaced by the cult of the “holy body of God.”²⁴ A detailed Christian interpretation of the bread and wine offered by Melchizedek was added in the gloss.²⁵ In the gloss to Genesis 19:26, Arragel disagreed with both Jewish and Christian commentators who understood that Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt. He seemed to be closer to those who thought that the land of Sodom became a pillar of salt.²⁶

We have a perfect example of the presentation of both a Christian and Jewish interpretation in the gloss to Genesis 49:10, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes.” Arragel underlined the deep differences between the two exegetical interpretations.²⁷ Christians see in this verse proof that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, has already come.²⁸ Among Jews there were also different opinions: For Abraham ibn Ezra, the meaning was that Jacob assured Judah preeminence until the coming of King David.²⁹ Nahmanides thought that the royal power inaugurated by David would never go to the descendants of the other tribes. After hearing these explanations, he concluded, each one should stay firm in his own faith.³⁰

The same happened when Arragel explained the meaning of Exodus 12:23, “when He sees the blood on the lintel,” underscoring the important differences between Christian and Jewish glosses on the passage. For Christians, the sacrifice of the lamb is a figure representing the passion

and death of Christ, whose blood liberates men from original sin. For Jews, the lamb represents a figure of the god of the Egyptians, and its death is a sign of the weakness of these people against Israel.³¹ At the end of the glosses of Exodus, Arragel added a long excursus on the intention of the Law: to turn men into angels. It included short references to the different opinions of Jews and Christians on the Law of the Gospels and on circumcision versus baptism.³²

On Leviticus 11:43, “You shall not make yourselves detestable,” Arragel commented that the opinions of the exegetes were divided. He showed that Jews take this passage in a literal way, while Christians prefer a figurative interpretation.³³ Arragel usually gave this explanation in many passages to underline the difference in both communities in their reading of the Torah and in the consequences of the precepts. For him, Jews and Christians agreed on the eternal character of the Law, even if they disagreed on the meaning of the precepts;³⁴ and more important than understanding the meaning of the precepts was to fulfill them in the way interpreted by theologians.³⁵ When explaining the prohibition of eating blood (Lev. 17:10), the rabbi suggested many different reasons offered by Jewish interpreters; at the end he gave figurative interpretations of “others,” probably Christians, confirming that Jews understood it always in a concrete and material way.³⁶ The absence of polemical intention was clear when the rabbi sought practical examples in both communities.³⁷

As is obvious, in many glosses the discrepancies between Jews and Christians about the Messiah are presented as particularly significant. Commenting on the prophecy of Balaam, in a detailed exposition in Numbers 22:2, Arragel very clearly explained the different interpretation of Jews and Christians on this important question of the signs of the coming of the Messiah.³⁸ A particular case is the gloss to Genesis 38:21, which was added, after erasing some lines, when the text was already copied, by a different hand and with more ink than usual. The contents, however, were not new: For Christians the Messiah has to be God and man; for Jews, just man; they are still waiting for him and do not think that he has saved souls from original sin.³⁹

Commenting on Leviticus 16:16, on the way of making atonement, Arragel compared both religions in search of coincidences: God established a day for forgiving all sins; today Jews have Yom Kippur and Christians have Good Friday.⁴⁰ Commenting on the observance of Saturday or Sunday by each community in the long gloss on festivities, Leviticus 23:2, he described the situation and the reasons or “benefits” for both communi-

ties without taking a position in the matter. Christians, he said, have the additional benefit of the memory of the resurrection.⁴¹ An example of Arragel's respect for Christian doctrines can be found in the gloss to Deuteronomy 6:4, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." The rabbi feels the need to state that underlining the uniqueness of God is not equivalent to denying the Trinity, leaving this question to the theologians.⁴²

Sometimes, said the rabbi, the interpretation of the Christian exegetes is shared by some Jews. In the gloss to Isaiah 14:12, he said that the Roman Church sees in this passage the fall of the bad angels with Lucifer, and some Jewish interpreters agree with that interpretation, while others disagree.⁴³ Many times, even in these passages, the transition from Jewish to Christian materials is not completely clear, producing at least some confusion. The gloss to Genesis 2:3 is particularly representative of a "conglomerate" of the two interpretations: The first paragraph is a Jewish interpretation of the "blessing" and "sanctification" of the seventh day. It is followed by a long Christian interpretation that is not announced as such, and probably was not introduced by Arragel but by the friars.⁴⁴ First, there is a Trinitarian explanation and then a philosophical view of the world divided into three parts.⁴⁵ A long allegorical-historical explanation follows about the days of creation parallel with the coming millennia, taken from Nahmanides's commentary, but with substantial changes.⁴⁶ While in Nahmanides, the words "the redeemer, the son of David," appear in the sixth millennium, in the text of the manuscript they appear in the fourth millennium, corresponding to the fourth day of creation, during the period of the Second Temple, when the Messiah was born and original sin was forgiven.⁴⁷ In the fifth millennium an allusion was added to the persecutions and martyrs in the time of Nero. During the sixth millennium, wild animals, presided over by the serpent and the Antichrist, will conquer the world, until defeated by Christ and Elias.⁴⁸ A general conversion follows, without a division of laws.⁴⁹ The text, probably added by the Christian reviser, concludes: You should remember all this; it is a true secret.⁵⁰

In the gloss to Genesis 2:7, we find a Jewish interpretation followed by the opposite, disqualifying Christian opinion, added without any announcement: According to some interpreters, the earth from which Adam was formed was taken from the place where the altar of the Temple was to be built, so that he would be forgiven for his sin. But a Christian voice emerges: He who had this opinion did not know that the sin of Adam should be forgiven thanks to the blood and passion of Christ!⁵¹ It is

possible that the first lines of the gloss to Genesis 3:19, “until you return to the ground,” with its allusion to the theory of the four elements, were written by Arragel. After a short transition, we find Christian materials clearly stating that the previous lines were a literal interpretation and presented original sin as one of the “foundations of faith.”⁵² The quotation from Psalms is in Latin. God had pity on men and chose the passion and death of His Son Jesus for the salvation of human beings, since the one who made this sacrifice had to be at the same time God and man.⁵³ The long Christian addition included several quotations of Paul and John, and allusions to the resurrection of “Jhesu el Mexias.”⁵⁴

Commenting on Genesis 17:1, the pact of circumcision, the first words seem to be completely Jewish. But without any transition, we find the justification of why circumcision was transformed into baptism, and we hear Christian words: The pact of circumcision was mentioned thirteen times in the passage, a figure of Jesus and the twelve apostles.⁵⁵ And the text enlarged the comparison, alluding to the twelve heavenly bodies and the primary cause that moves them all.⁵⁶ Although Arragel could have reproduced the Christian “registros” in these cases as he had received them, a revision of the text by the revisers cannot be excluded.

We find some strange cases in the manuscript that can be explained as a mistake of the copyists: At the end of the gloss on Numbers 19:15 after commenting on the interpretation of the Jews and promising a longer explanation in Deuteronomy, the text announced the opinion of the Christian exegetes,⁵⁷ but there is only blank space in the lower part of the column, without any text. The same happens at the end of Psalm 21, where the announcement of four conclusions of the Latin commentators is followed by a blank space.⁵⁸ Did the copyist “forget” to include separate Christian “registros” provided by the friars?

Christian-Only Interpretations

In some cases, the gloss presents just the Christian exegesis of the passage. Arragel made clear that it was their point of view and that Jews did not share it. But sometimes there was no commentary by the rabbi, and the Christian interpretation of the passage was the only one. In a previous study I referred to approximately twenty passages in the first folios of the Book of Genesis that have a particular mark in the form of a cross, in most cases corresponding to additions by the copyists or by the Christian revisers. Besides those cases there are others that are unmarked in

all of the other books. Among the passages where we find just one interpretation, the Christian one, without any note about the origin of the materials, there is, for instance, the gloss to Genesis 42:17: "And he put them all in custody for three days." It is presented as a direct allusion to the resurrection of the Messiah on the third day.⁵⁹ In the same way, for Genesis 43:24, "and gave [them] water, and they washed their feet," the gloss says that this is an allusion to baptism.⁶⁰ In Genesis 45:2, "And he wept aloud," the gloss says that he was weeping for the cruel death of Christ.⁶¹ No doubt, Arragel cannot have written these clearly Christian exegeses; they had to have come from the revisers.

In the gloss to Genesis 2:7, Arragel stated (with *Bereshit Rabbah* and Rashi) that Adam was created from heavenly and earthly materials. The same principle applies to the first six days of creation. The creation of Adam is placed on the seventh day, against the whole Jewish tradition that makes of the seventh day the first Shabat, free from any work. This can only be a Christian addition.⁶² The gloss to Genesis 17:20, about Ismael, "He will be the father of twelve rulers," has only Christian materials, explaining that the Hebrew word *nesiim* can be translated "princes" or "clouds," and that the princes will convert by baptism in the way the clouds turn to water.⁶³ After the lemma in the version of Genesis 18:2, "Abraham looked up and saw three men," the copyist added in the same hand, as part of the text, before the Jewish commentary: "and he adored the One, three persons and only one God," including in this way the well-known Augustinian Trinitarian formula.⁶⁴

Could Arragel have written in the gloss to Genesis 25:23, "Two nations are in your womb," that the prophet saw the two peoples as the division of the Laws, alluding clearly to the Jewish and Christian Laws?⁶⁵ The same question arises in the gloss to Genesis 26:18, "Isaac reopened the wells," in which the whole text is homogeneous and seems to be focused on a Christian interpretation in spite of allusions to some parallel meanings in Jewish sources: The three wells are "a great secret of faith," a figure of the three laws: the law of nature, the law of scripture, and the law of grace. The third well is a figure of the law of grace resulting from the coming of the Messiah, free from the observance of the scriptural law.⁶⁶ This description of the law of the messianic times seems to me more in consonance with Christian than with Jewish theology.

It is probably also in the case of the gloss to Genesis 30:25, on the birth of Joseph, where after a general introduction that could be signed by Jews and Christians, we read the careful advice: "See and do not be wrong."

Christians are Israel, as witnessed in the Gospels, and the son of the Virgin, an Israelite, made everybody convert to the holy Catholic faith.⁶⁷ Similarly, in the gloss to Genesis 47:28, “Jacob lived in Egypt,” the manuscript states that the coming of Jacob to Egypt prefigured the third captivity of Israel, in the time of the Romans; they themselves deserved this captivity for having killed Christ.⁶⁸ It does not seem like an addition and, of course, it is not a Jewish point of view. The gloss to Leviticus 4:24, “and [he] shall lay his hand on the head of the goat,” has from the beginning a clear Christian content, dealing with the oral confession of the sinner before the priest to forgive completely his sins.⁶⁹

In the gloss to Zechariah 11:8, after some Jewish opinions, we find a direct allusion to Christian doctrines, and the lives of the saints, especially St. Paul, without any difference from previous words. It also seems to be an addition.⁷⁰ In the classic passage of Isaiah 7:14 about Emmanuel, there is something peculiar: While the Hebrew word *‘almah* is not translated by the rabbi, in spite of the explanation of the gloss saying that “dizen los ebreos: ahe, la moça conçibira” (The Hebrews say: *Ahe*, the young girl will conceive) and “la romana egleja . . . romançan ahe, que la virgen conçibira” (The Roman church . . . translated *ahe* into Romance [saying] that the Virgin will conceive), the heading of the gloss, differing from the translation, is “Ahe que la virgo conçebira e parira fijo” (*Ahe*, that the Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son). It is not very likely that the rabbi himself chose the Christian translation in contrast to the content of the commentary.⁷¹

Conclusion

In the version of Song of Songs 1:4 (“Draw me after you, let us make haste”), we read only “Lleuame, que en pos de ti correremos,” (Carry me, for we run after you) more or less in line with the original Hebrew, the Vulgate and all the Romance versions. However, there is some blank space before the continuation, showing traces of ink, probably some words that were erased. But the gloss has (with an addition that was not in the Hebrew or Latin text): “Lleuame, que en pos de ti correremos al olor de la tu virginidat” (Carry me, for we will run after you to the scent of your virginity). The commentary then adds: “La biblia ebrayca non dize: lleuame en pos de ti e correremos al olor de tu virginidat.” (The Hebrew Bible does not say “Carry me after you,” and “We will run after the scent

of your virginity.”) Is all of this the original text of Arragel or the result of a correction?⁷²

We do not know all of the details of the revision, writing, and illumination of the manuscript of Arragel's translation of the Bible. In any case, as has been shown, the manuscript included in its final form a significant amount of materials that were probably not included by Arragel himself. We can suspect the Christian correctors' intention in introducing these changes in Arragel's words. Maestre D. Luis de Guzmán opened a new approach to the Jews: He wanted to know their interpretations since they were closer to Christians, and were not included in the category of enemies of the Catholic faith, which was reserved for the followers of Islam.⁷³ But the religious leadership of Toledo, which a few years earlier had heard the sermons of Vincent Ferrer trying to convert the Jews, had not changed so much. The goal of the revisers seems to have been to assert the “truth” of the Christian interpretations vis-à-vis that of the Jews. While Arragel's approach may have been irenic, the revisers were nevertheless interested above all in the defense of the “true” religion. As Fray Arias wrote to Arragel, it would be much better if the rabbi recognized the Trinity, the Roman faith, and Jesus the Messiah.⁷⁴ What seems clear enough is that the revisers substantially modified the glosses of some books and passages, in many ways changing the meaning of Arragel's work.

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PART IV

Exegesis and Gender

Vocabularies of Difference

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10 Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis

JESUS AS ANTIHERO IN *TOLEDOT YESHU*

Alexandra Cuffel

Until recently, making any kind of solid, textually defensible argument about the influence in the Middle Ages of the Jewish antigospel tradition, the *Toledot Yeshu* (*The Life Story of Jesus*) has been hampered by the late provenance of any Hebrew manuscripts.¹ Instead, scholars have had to work with a very limited early Aramaic rendering, and then allusions to negative Jewish traditions about Jesus's birth and career in medieval Christian texts.² Concrete evidence as to Jewish readership and use of this text during the Middle Ages has been scant indeed.³ The discovery by Yaaqov Deutsch of two versions of the *Toledot*—one, a Cairo Genizah fragment, and the other, a manuscript that is in itself late (sixteenth century) and seemingly of Byzantine provenance judging by the script, but that is linguistically clearly a copy from a medieval text—both of which parallel the old Aramaic version in a number of ways, has prompted scholars to reconsider the question of medieval recensions and reception of the *Toledot Yeshu*.⁴ Furthermore, courtesy of the editorial project of Peter Schäfer and the scholarly work of Miriam Goldstein, the substantial quantity and significance of medieval Judeo-Arabic versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* have become apparent. The earliest of these manuscripts Goldstein dates from the eleventh or twelfth century, though most surviving manuscripts come from the Mamlūk period.⁵ The significance of a substantial medieval Judeo-Arabic corpus of *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts or its relationship to a European *Toledot Yeshu* tradition remains to be explored in depth.⁶ The current essay is a preliminary exploration of aspects of the function, transmission, and meaning of the *Toledot Yeshu* in the Byzantine, medieval Islamic, and the medieval Western European world. First, I will argue that the *Toledot Yeshu* needs to be understood as a kind of oral epic, similar in structure and function to many of the Arabic

epics that were also recorded as we know them in the Mamlūk period. Secondly, I will suggest that elements of the *Toledot Yeshu* epic made particular sense as polemic against certain kinds of Christian anti-Jewish arguments in the Middle East about the Incarnation. It likewise served as pointed response to Muslim attitudes toward Mary and Jesus. I show that one narrative strand within the *Toledot* cycle was developed specifically as a counternarrative to Christian stories about the finding of the true cross and the anti-Jewish elements within these legends, first in Babylonia/Mesopotamia and then in Byzantium, the Levant, Egypt, and Western Europe. Finally, focusing on the portrayal of Jesus, I will show how the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions circulating in the medieval Muslim and Christian worlds undermined not only Christian and Muslim claims about Jesus's holiness, but portrayed him as the very epitome of holy masculinity gone wrong in ways that would have made sense to Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike.

Arabic epics consist of a series of related stories focused on a particular character and his or her associates. Together these stories make up an account of that character's life or main adventures and deeds. This characteristic is especially true of long cycles, but also true of shorter ones. Embedded within such narratives are often story cycles about tangentially related characters and their adventures.⁷ These epics were, and in some cases, still are, recounted aloud for entertainment.⁸ Over a long period, the entire cycle can be recited, but individual adventures can also function independently and be told for their own sake, or in turn be adapted and placed in other narratives. For example, we have evidence that some of what became known as *A Thousand and One Nights* included other story cycles that circulated independently.⁹ The Arabic epics were eventually written down—the Mamlūk period seems to have been a time when that process took place for many of these cycles—however, they continued to be a major source of entertainment in both their written and oral forms.¹⁰ This type of genre was also applied to the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and in turn inspired a kind of counter “*sīra*,”—namely, Christian stories of the monk, Baḥīrā, who, in Christian accounts, taught Muḥammad a corrupt version of Christianity, upon which Muḥammad based Islam.¹¹ These renditions stand in contrast to Muslim ones, in which the monk recognizes that Muḥammad is sent by God and predicts and condones his message.¹² Jews were well aware of Christian forms of counternarratives, for as Barbara Roggema has shown, Jews developed their

own variations of the Baḥīrā narrative designed to counter anti-Jewish elements in Christian and Muslim versions of the Baḥīrā tradition.¹³ Medieval Jewish polemical writing from Europe and the Middle East also incorporated other aspects of Christian antibiography about the Prophet Muḥammad, such as, for example, his supposed ignominious death or his insanity.¹⁴

The *Toledot Yeshu* closely follows these patterns of intertwined storytelling, entertainment, and polemic within the Islamic world. Similar to the Baḥīrā legends, the *Toledot Yeshu* provides a counternarrative, or a counterexegesis to rival sacred stories, in this case the Christian Gospels. Like many other epics, the *Toledot Yeshu* has moveable subplots, such as the story of Peter, versions of the Empress Helene and the finding of the true cross, or even stages of Jesus's own life, which could function as pieces of a larger narrative, or be told or read independently.¹⁵ In passing, Miriam Goldstein has also noted the text's similarity to Arabic "folk literature," by which she means Arabic epics and texts like *A Thousand and One Nights*.¹⁶ Furthermore, I am certainly not the first to call the *Toledot Yeshu* a counterhistory or to notice its similarities to Christian antibiographies of the Prophet.¹⁷ What scholars have yet to consider, however, is the significance of these observations for the study and understanding of the *Toledot* in the Middle East, and even Europe. First, realizing that the *Toledot Yeshu* consisted of related but separable narrative elements that were designed to be transformable according to the teller's mood or need means that while we may speak of narrative families of the *Toledot*, as some have, looking for any kind of ur-text is ultimately not the most helpful path to determining the development of the tradition or its context. Understanding that the story or stories of the *Toledot* were primarily an oral literature, and designed to entertain as well as polemicize, also helps to explain why so few early written versions of the *Toledot* seem to have survived in Europe, though Christian destruction of manuscripts and the desire to hide these traditions from Christians for safety's sake may have also played a part.¹⁸ Yet much of the medieval European Christian material that we have points to an oral tradition, the survival or lack of survival of which had little to do with Christian destruction of physical texts.¹⁹ A potential indicator of the substantially oral character of the *Toledot Yeshu* during the Middle Ages is the version of the *Toledot Yeshu* contained in Ramon Martí's *Pugio fidei*, written around 1278. In the *Pugio*, Martí compiled a substantial number of passages from the Talmud,

biblical commentaries, and various midrashic texts applicable to the Messiah or to Jesus and coupled these with a refutation of Jewish interpretations.²⁰ In the manuscripts, including the oldest manuscript, which contains Hebrew, Martí gives the Hebrew of the quoted passages and usually translates all or part of them into Latin.²¹ In the *Toledot Yeshu* that he recounts, he does not provide any Hebrew or Judeo-Arabic text, although his narrative corresponds closely with some late Hebrew versions and with some of the Judeo-Arabic accounts that we have.²² I would suggest that he did not provide the Hebrew because the story was an oral one, not one he had read. He may have read a Judeo-Arabic text, yet given that he did not record a Judeo-Arabic copy of the tale as he did for the Qurʾān and ḥadīth passages that he cites elsewhere, it seems unlikely that he had such a written version from which to draw.²³ Paula Tartakoff has recently discovered evidence in inquisitorial trials of versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* being told by Jews and conversos to one another.²⁴ Certainly these stories served to reinforce or encourage Jewish rather than Christian identity; however, they also seem to have functioned as an evening's entertainment, as in the case of one conversa, Salvadora Salvat, who recounted the tale of Jesus's illegitimate conception to her children as they all sat around the fire, just as her parents had told her when she was a child.²⁵

Within the Islamic milieu, Arabic epics were popular among Jews in Egypt. Adnan Husain has argued convincingly that part of what drew the twelfth-century Jew Samawʿal al-Maghribi to convert to Islam was his fascination with Muslim histories, biographies, and epics.²⁶ Indeed, his approximate contemporary, Moses Maimonides, warned in his commentary to the Mishnah against reading such material: "It is a loss of time in nonsense, for example these books which are found among the Arabs that recount history, the behavior of kings, the genealogies of Arabs and books of songs, for nothing comes out of the books having any wisdom, or use for the body except a loss of time alone."²⁷ The harshness of his condemnation demonstrated the depth of his scorn, but also points to the popularity of these genres among his contemporaries by illustrating that they needed such strong words of discouragement. For all his disapproval, however, the passage also suggests Maimonides himself seemed to be familiar with quite an array of popular Arabic literature. Thus, the format of the *Toledot Yeshu*, complete with villains, tricksters, and battles of wit and magic, would have been both very familiar and appealing to Jews in the Islamic world. Potentially Muslims and Christians would have found the cycle entertaining as well, except for the blasphemous

(from their perspective) portrayal of Jesus as an illegitimate son of a menstruating woman who led people astray with illicitly obtained magical powers, rather than as a holy prophet or the son of God, miraculously born from a virgin and on a divine mission.²⁸ Yet there are indications that Muslims not only knew of these traditions, but also co-opted and transformed some of them for their own purposes. The Muslim legalist, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350 CE) notes in passing that Jews maintain that Jesus was illegitimate and born of a menstruant.²⁹ Shi'ī Muslims in particular adopted and transformed elements of the *Toledot* into anti-Sunni polemic. They frequently claimed that menstrual, illegitimate origins marked individuals who either divided the community generally or, specifically within a Shi'ī context, opposed the descendants of the Prophet and his family, the *ahl al-bayt*.³⁰ Sometimes the mothers of such individuals, in addition to having been forbidden sexual partners for the fathers, had been raped, bringing this tradition even closer to the Jewish *Toledot* stories.³¹ This apparent borrowing and adaptation of the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* material by Shi'ī authors is in keeping with a general tendency by a number of Shi'ī writers to be interested in Jewish texts and even to identify with Jews' role in sacred history.³² In some Muslim apocalyptic traditions, the *Dajjāl* (the Muslim equivalent of the Antichrist or Armilos) is born of a prostitute, making him a *walad zinah*, or child of an illegitimate sexual union, similar to the opponents of the *ahl al-bayt* and to Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu*.³³

Such polemical stories had meaning in the Muslim community for much the same reasons that they did in the Jewish one. Being the product of a forbidden sexual union, i.e., the product of adultery or rape, distanced the child from holiness in Islam as it did in Judaism. Menstruation is impure in Islam as it is in Judaism, and intercourse is forbidden during it, although as Sharon Koren has argued, it did not have the same level of negative associations or metaphorical power in Islam as it did in Judaism because it was merely one of many daily impurities with which a Muslim might come into contact.³⁴ According to medieval Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religious and medical literature, children conceived during menstruation were thought to have birth defects or illness as a result.³⁵ To designate someone as being born of an illegitimate union while the mother was menstruating was to assign an ignoble, debasing birth that marked the person as the product of impure, disease-producing, and profoundly feminine blood. I would suggest that while Muslims rejected such a characterization for Jesus, whom they deemed to be a prophet and

the Messiah, they saw the power of such a polemic and adopted these elements of antibiography to apply to the enemies of Islam, whether to individual opponents, or to the ultimate adversary, the *Dajjāl*. On the other hand, because Muslims shared these polemical topoi, the Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* would have been a powerful counter to Muslim claims of Jesus's sanctity, since it attributed to Jesus the very markers of an enemy to Islam and sanctity, particularly in a region where Shi'i Muslims had long had political sway and there remained a Shi'i population even after the Fāṭimid Caliphate's demise.³⁶

One of the early Judeo-Arabic versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* that has come to us from the Cairo Genizah, and which was told in extenso by Martí, addresses an anti-Jewish hagiography that was especially popular among Christians in the Middle East—namely, that of the Empress Helene, or its variants, the Protonike legend and the Judas Kyriakos story.³⁷ The Genizah manuscript that we have is quite fragmentary, mentioning the queen only briefly before being cut off. Enough of the manuscript remains, however, to suggest that it encompassed some variation of the full legend that is found in later Hebrew texts containing the tale.³⁸ Furthermore, according to the Aramaic fragments that have survived and that comprise the earliest version that we have of a part of the *Toledot Yeshu*, one Judah the Gardener assists the rabbis, and is responsible for guarding the corpse of Jesus.³⁹ This character appears in the Hebrew text, which Deutsch argues is a translation of the Aramaic version that we have, and in this text Judah assists in concealing and guarding the body of Jesus, as he does in other, later Hebrew narratives.⁴⁰ According to later Hebrew versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, the Jews bring Jesus to be judged by Helene.⁴¹ First she is convinced by the Jews, then by Jesus, and then the Jews again when Judas or Judah (whom the rabbis have helped to gain the power of the divine name so he may combat Jesus, who also has engraved or embedded the name in his flesh) forces Jesus to the ground by either urinating or ejaculating on him, rendering both of them impure, and thus no longer able to fly to heaven.⁴² Helene then consigns Jesus to the judgment of the Jews, who beat him.⁴³ In one account, he escapes again, learns more magic in Egypt, and tries to regain the power of the divine name upon his return.⁴⁴ In this telling as with the others, Jesus is captured and executed, only to have his body “stolen”—in truth taken and hidden by Judah the Gardener. The empress is then reconvinced that Jesus must have been holy based on his disciples' claims that he has risen again, and she threatens to kill all the Jews. The Jews get a period of grace in order to

look for the body, and, fortunately, Judah is found. He gives up the body, and Helene is convinced to leave the Jews alone.⁴⁵

These variations of Jesus's contests with the rabbis, his trial and execution, and the quest on the part of Helene to find Jesus's body together appear to constitute a rather garbled version of the story of the discovery of the true cross by the Empress Helene, mother of Emperor Constantine I. The fifth-century Christian historian Sozomen is the first to refer to a legend in which a Jew assists Helene in finding the cross, a story that by the sixth century became the Syriac and later Latin legend of Judas or Jude Kyriakos, who knew of the cross's location through family memory. He is pressured or tortured by Helene into revealing the cross's location, and then converts after several miracles.⁴⁶ The *Toledot Yeshu* rendition seems problematic because the Empress Helene was not a contemporary of Jesus, something that Martí delightedly points out in his efforts to dismiss the story as fatuous and false to the point that no intelligent Christian could credit it.⁴⁷ However, I argue that the *Toledot* retelling is a very careful counterexegesis directed specifically against the Helene legend that was initially developed by Mesopotamian, Syriac-speaking Christian communities, among whom a variety of versions of the finding of the true cross was popular.

In the Syriac recension, Helene is replaced by a fictitious empress, Protonike, who is impressed by the miracles wrought by Jesus's disciples immediately after his death. She helps them recover the true cross from the Jews who persecute the Christians and prevent them from accessing it.⁴⁸ The Protonike account is also contained in the Syriac *Doctrine of Addai*, a text which focuses primarily on the correspondence of King Abgar with Jesus, among others, and which was compiled in its full form around the fifth century, according to Jan Wilhelm Drijvers. Drijvers postulates that the Protonike and Kyriakos versions were developed from the original Helene account and that *invenio crucis* traditions were incorporated into the *Doctrine of Addai* between 431 and 436 when the episcopate of Edessa was held by Rabbula. Rabbula would have heard the basic narrative during his pilgrimage to Jerusalem where the legend seems to have developed, and his enthusiasm for the true cross is evidenced by the hymn that he dedicated to the subject.⁴⁹ He is credited with vigorous missionizing to Jews and to various Christian groups whom he considered heretical, and he converted the synagogue of Edessa to a church dedicated to the martyrdom of St. Steven, another figure whose death was attributed to the Jews.⁵⁰ Thus, Drijvers suggests that the Protonike and *Doctrine of*

Addai narratives were part of a range of Rabbula's anti-Jewish measures on the one hand, but also that they served as local Christian propaganda connecting the Christianization of Edessa with the time of Jesus himself. He even suggests that the Protonike version of the discovery of the true cross may have been composed specifically to that end to incorporate the *Doctrine of Addai*.⁵¹ The impression that this region in particular saw an expansion of anti-Jewish narratives focused on the death of Jesus and the concealment of the cross is furthered by the circulation of Syriac hymns recounting the story of Helene and her struggle with the Jews to reveal the location of the cross and by the incorporation of a story of the discovery of the cross in Syriac narratives of the legend of Mary's Dormition and Assumption.⁵² Certainly the early Syriac texts contain lengthier, more overtly hostile discussions of the Jews than do the early Latin or most of the Greek ones.⁵³

A number of specific details of these various Syriac narratives are significant when trying to place versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* in context with them. One of the people with whom King Abgar exchanges letters is Caesar Tiberius. In the account contained within the Dormition legend, it is an unnamed "hegemon." These versions are much closer to the Aramaic one and its Hebrew translation, where the main rulers with whom the Jews interact are Caesar Tiberius and the "hegemon" Pilatus, rather than Queen Helene. As Deutsch points out, the emphasis is not on Jesus's parentage, although that question is raised in the two Hebrew reports closely related to the Aramaic tradition that Deutsch found.⁵⁴ Instead, the texts focus on Jesus's effort to prove himself to the emperor, on the rabbis' interrogation of John the Baptist and Jesus's disciples, and on Jesus's death and the fate of his corpse.⁵⁵ In this way the same period of Jesus's life is the preoccupation of the author of the Aramaic *Toledot Yeshu* and of the Christian narrators of the *Doctrine of Addai*, and the Protonike and Dormition legends. Furthermore, they all seem to be products of the same region and written within approximately one hundred years of one another. Michael Sokoloff has demonstrated through a careful linguistic analysis of the Aramaic that this version of the *Toledot* was written in Babylonian as opposed to Palestinian Aramaic, and he dates the composition to the middle of the first millennium CE.⁵⁶ I would argue therefore that this Aramaic composition was created as a specific counternarrative to the various Christian Syriac accounts about Jews' complicity in Jesus's death, and their efforts to hide the wonder-working power of the cross and its worth as an object of veneration.

In the Aramaic text, Jews are in charge of John the Baptist's questioning and then the pursuit of Jesus and his disciples. Caesar Tiberius is a relatively passive figure who holds John the Baptist captive because he leads people astray. In contrast to the *Doctrine of Addai*, Tiberius supports the Jews in their prosecution of Jesus and his followers rather than punishing them for their role in Jesus's death.⁵⁷ With this shift of details from the Christian to the Jewish version, Jews are not only depicted as religiously justified in their handling of John the Baptist and Jesus, they are portrayed as politically powerful, either in that they have the right to question and decide the fate of those imprisoned by Tiberius, or because they have substantial influence over the ruler. Such a portrayal stood in contrast to the Jews' helplessness in the face of political figures in the Christian narratives.

Whereas in the Protonike stories, contact with the cross resurrects Protonike's daughter, thus revealing the cross's true nature, in this particular version of the *Toledot Yeshu*, Jesus claims he is able to make a girl pregnant without the benefit of intercourse. When her "pregnancy" lasts too long, the "child" is taken from her, and turns out to be a stone. The young woman dies.⁵⁸ In this plot twist, the Jewish author(s) mock(s) Jesus's claim to come from a virginal birth. On the one hand, they make him unable to recreate the miracle that was attributed to his own birth. On the other, in the Jewish account, rather than bringing life to a child (especially a child of the rulers), Jesus brings death to the woman and her offspring. Overall, the message is that Jesus is incapable of imbuing anyone with life. Instead, his so-called powers bring suffering and death.

More powerful, however, is the polemic regarding Jesus's death and the fate of his corpse. In contrast to the Christian narratives, it is not the cross that is lost and maliciously concealed or desecrated by the Jews. Rather, it is Jesus's body itself that comes into question. In the Aramaic text and its later Hebrew translation, Judah the Gardener willingly produces what the Christians claim has disappeared (in contrast to Christian narratives where he does so only when tortured and threatened). This time, however, in doing so, Judah disproves the Christians' contentions that Jesus has ascended from the cross into heaven. Instead, the "discovery" becomes an opportunity to further demonstrate the falseness of Jesus's claims to divinity through the profound and very public display and desecration of his corpse in the market place. In the Hebrew version, he is bound by his feet and dragged through the market like a dog, whereas in the Aramaic he is merely rolled through the market.⁵⁹ The cross is proof

of his criminality, not God's plan or a source of blessing, and his death is final, a pathetic humiliation, witnessed by all, approved by rulers, and quite rightly instigated by the Jews. Jews are not the ones who seek to hide the true nature of Jesus's death or the cross. Rather it is the Christians who conceal events, though in both the Jewish and the Christian tradition, a Jew—Judah, Jude, or Judas—is the one who reveals the truth.

This version of the *Toledot Yeshu* certainly traveled and was known farther west. Peter Schäfer has demonstrated that Agobard (c. 769–840), who became bishop of Lyons, knew an adaptation of this Aramaic *Toledot*, probably from oral accounts, and provides a summary of it in his *De Judaicis superstitionibus* (*On Jewish Superstitions*).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, I would suggest that as the *Toledot Yeshu* narrative moved west, the material relating to Queen Helene was incorporated into the tale in order to better answer stories of the discovery of the true cross and the role of Judah that were more current in Byzantium, Egypt and the Levant, and finally in the Latin West. The account in which Helene was the primary ruler and was prepared to pressure the Jews into revealing the whereabouts of the cross was already circulating in Syriac in the form of hymns in the Church of the East.⁶¹ In making Helene a contemporary of Jesus, the originators of this cycle were, I maintain, intentionally conflating the Protonike and Helene stories.

An additional indication that some version of the true-cross story—in which Helene was the main actor and a contemporary of Jesus—circulated among Middle Eastern Jews and was a target of polemic, may be found in versions of the Judeo-Arabic anti-Christian treatise, *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf* (*Account of the Disputation of the Priest*), thought to have been composed in the mid-ninth century. The writer-compiler of the *Qiṣṣat* presents an argument similar to that of Ramon Martí, this time turned against the Christians—namely, that the story of Helene, the mother of Constantine, and her discovery of the cross, does not appear in the Gospels and that Helene lived long after Jesus.⁶² At what stage in the development of the Helene cycle in Jewish circles these remarks may be placed, or what they show about the relationship between the Christian and Jewish traditions, is unclear, since most manuscripts of the *Qiṣṣat* are from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶³ This paragraph about Helene is not contained in the earliest versions that have survived.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, while evidence of Egyptian and Byzantine influences exist in some manuscripts, the original milieu from which the *Qiṣṣat* sprang seems to have been the Abbasid Empire and with strong connections to Syriac

Christians in Iraq.⁶⁵ Thus the *Qiṣṣat*, like certain threads within the *Toledot*, derive from the same religious-cultural environment that produced the Syriac narratives about the true cross. Either this passage testifies to a Christian version of the true-cross story from which Jews drew and in which Protonike and Helene are conflated, or this account is an intentional distortion by the Jewish writers. If the latter is the case, the point of this “reformulation,” which is attributed to the Christians themselves, seems to have been that the Christians had a poor sense of chronology or recollection of the contents of their own holy books. Versions of the *Qiṣṣat* further polemicize against the queen (in some she is specifically called Helene, in others she is anonymous) by calling her a prostitute (*zāniyah*), and against Constantine, by calling him “the small” (*al-ṣaghīr*) in contrast to “the great.”⁶⁶

In these new Helene accounts of the *Toledot Yesu*, as with those more closely related to the Protonike texts, the empress is not seeking the cross, but rather the body of Jesus, and prior to that search, she is given an entire history in which she vacillates between believing the rabbis or Jesus and his disciples. This on-going debate and effort to “win” Helene to one camp or the other has roots in the original Aramaic text and certain Syriac stories of the finding of the cross in which the Jews explain the true nature of Jesus and his followers to Tiberius or the hegemon. I would contend, however, that the expansion of the debate before Helene is also due to the Christian Helene and Judas Kyriakos legends, in which Helene calls Jews, including their most learned, before her to question them regarding the location of the cross and to debate religion with them.⁶⁷ In the later Hebrew versions especially, the argument is considerably expanded, however: The Jews are the initiators, and their primary opponent is Jesus himself, although it is still Helene who must be convinced. This “pre-history” allows the Jewish narrators to depict this very Christian queen as condoning Jesus’s torture and death, and as being at the very least uncertain as Jesus’s true nature: divine wonder-worker or malicious trickster. At various points she recognizes the rabbis’ authority, giving a stamp of approval for the Jewish position, not just from an imperial source, but from a Christian saint.⁶⁸ She retains her status as persecutor of the Jews, but she is also responsible for doing what the Jews are accused of doing—tormenting and being accessories to Jesus’s death. Judas Iscariot remains the rather victimized hero of the story, but in this case, he is the rabbis’ hero, who proves to Helene the illegitimate source of Jesus’s power and orchestrates Jesus’s quite literal downfall. Tying Judas Iscariot to Judas

Kyriakos of the Christian legend was a deliberate counter to Christian exegesis of the story, in which Judas Kyriakos betrays Satan and redeems himself and his fellow Jews in contrast to Judas Iscariot, who followed Satan's lead and condemned himself by aiding the rabbis against Jesus.⁶⁹ He already appeared as an ally of the rabbis and appears to have been conflated with Judah the Gardner in the Aramaic version and its Hebrew derivatives. However, in the later renditions the two figures are clearly differentiated, which allows for a greater dramatic role for Judas Iscariot.⁷⁰ Later renditions of *Toledot Yeshu* retained the figure of Judah the Gardener in many instances, partly because the character had become ingrained in the narrative. Already imbedded in the Christian Gospel tradition was the hint or suspicion that the gardener who owned the land on which Jesus's tomb was located had done something to his corpse.⁷¹ Also, the play upon names continued to serve as a polemical reversal of the Christian personage of Judas. Judas Iscariot in the Christian tradition had betrayed Jesus in a garden and had bought a field and died in it.⁷² In the Jewish versions, a Judas/Judah in a garden is indeed associated with Jesus's death, but he is wise, righteous, even as Jesus's death was justified. In the later Hebrew versions the two characters both serve as a counterexegesis to the Christian account of Judas Iscariot.

The Judeo-Arabic versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, therefore, were very specifically designed not only to discredit Christian claims about Jesus but also to counter an important Christian anti-Jewish narrative in the Middle East. In the West, the legend of the true cross had been circulating throughout the early Middle Ages and the cross itself had become the focus of liturgical feasts and a particular object of devotion for pilgrims to Jerusalem.⁷³ In the twelfth century, especially after the loss of a piece of the true cross to the Muslims at the Battle of Hattin (1187), devotion to and concern about the true cross intensified.⁷⁴ The proliferation of the story of the finding of the true cross on cathedral sculptures, medallions, manuscript illuminations, and even embroidery, and also of reliquaries containing pieces of the true cross, i.e. specifically *staurothèques*, point to the increase in devotion to the true cross in the West, in part assisted by artistic cross-fertilization with Byzantium.⁷⁵ Included within these artistic and also literary recountings of the finding of the true cross was the narrative of Judas Kyriakos and the other Jews who sought to hide the cross and whom Helene threatened. Preoccupation with this theme in Western Europe increased, especially, according to Barbara Baert, with the inclusion of the tale of Judas Kyriakos within the *Legenda*

Aurea (*Golden Legend*) by Jacob of Voragine (d. 1298).⁷⁶ This swelling of interest from the twelfth century onwards in not only relics of the true cross but the story of its discovery and the role of Judas Kyriakos, I would suggest, serves at least in part as the context and motive for the introduction of the *Toledot Yeshu* narrative, which was specifically directed at the Christian narrative of Helene, Judas Kyriakos, and the true cross. That the brief attack against the story of Helene and the cross was included in *Nestor ha-Komer* (*Nestor the Priest*), the Hebrew rendition of *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Usquf*, suggests that European Jewish redactors found this topic necessary for refuting their Christian contemporaries.⁷⁷ Significantly, the version that Martí reproduces in his *Pugio fidei* is one that is primarily aimed at the Helene story; the narrative of Jesus's illegitimate birth from a menstruating woman—another popular element in many recensions of the *Toledot*—are largely absent in the *Pugio*.⁷⁸ Martí mocked the *Toledot* version of the Helene story because, seemingly, he did not recognize it for what it was: a substantially transformed story of the finding of the cross (substituted with Jesus himself in the Jewish versions) that combined elements of the Protonike version, which was unknown in the West, with the more familiar Helene narrative.⁷⁹ This subplot within the *Toledot Yeshu* cycle would have been especially powerful and relevant as a counternarrative for Jews in thirteenth-century Europe and later, as they were regularly faced with the long-standing anti-Jewish polemic and expectations of conversion inherent in the *invenio crucis* accounts, visual, written, and spoken (in sermons).⁸⁰ Ramon Martí encountered the tale at a time when not only Christians but also Jews were seeking to translate religious, scientific, and literary texts from Arabic into their own idioms, even as Christians and Jews were also translating Hebrew and Latin sources respectively. The translation of Arabic and Hebrew religious texts on the part of European Christians, and Arabic and Latin religious texts on the part of Jews, usually served polemical purposes, either for refuting the claims of the religious other, or, in some Christian cases, for missionizing. Ramon Martí's own *Pugio fidei* is a good example of this kind of translating endeavor for the sake of religious polemic, but starting in the twelfth century, Jews also began translating or summarizing portions of Arabic and Latin texts to aide in their endeavors to refute Christianity.⁸¹ Thus, that Ramon Martí encountered it in his discussions with Jews is not surprising.

Stephen Shoemaker underscores Marian and Eucharistic devotion as among the primary areas in which medieval Christian anti-Jewish

polemic was rife.⁸² Certainly, sections of the *Toledot Yeshu* that impugned Mary's virginity and purity directly countered Christian Marian piety in both the eastern Mediterranean and in Western, Latin Europe. Among the various types of Christians in the eastern Mediterranean, debates about the exact nature of Jesus's humanity had long been an issue. Integral to these debates were arguments about the degree to which God could be connected to the corporeality, suffering, and impurities of the human body, including the impurity of existing in a woman's womb.⁸³ Thus, in any counternarrative, emphasizing the impurity of Mary's womb, Jesus's sufferings, and susceptibility to human pollution would have been disturbing to Christians of various communities and doctrinal affiliations in Byzantium and the Middle East, even as they were to Muslims. In the West, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when new debates arose about the nature of Mary's body and Jesus's Incarnation, the *Toledot's* portrayal of Jesus as the suffering son of a sexually abused or promiscuous menstruant, who then died a horrible death, would have been especially distressing, as indicated by the increase of Jewish-Christian polemic from this period discussing these issues.⁸⁴ As a result, the *Toledot Yeshu* narratives had the potential for being a very pointed, effective anti-Incarnation polemic among Jews in Christian Europe in the later Middle Ages, which accounts for the eventual proliferation of versions of the cycle that include the conception and youth of Jesus.

Yet more interesting and less obvious is how the later *Toledot Yeshu* Hebrew narratives denigrate Jesus in very peculiarly gendered ways, ways that would have been potent to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim audiences, or that would have addressed internal Jewish expectations. According to Talmudic and *heikhalot* texts (i.e., texts describing rabbis' efforts to ascend the heavens into God's presence), even the whisper of menstrual impurity would bring the rabbi crashing back to earth. Thus, depicting Jesus as the son of a menstruant suggested he was the utter opposite of rabbinic masculine purity, and thus unable to approach the divine.⁸⁵ As one who could not even approach God, the idea that he could be the son of God or in any way heavenly would have been rendered repugnant and ridiculous to the Jewish audience of the *Toledot Yeshu*.

Associating Jesus with menstrual blood certainly feminized him, a move Western Christians were already beginning to make, albeit in a positive way, but the *Toledot* emphasized the impurity of the female, and now Jesus's body.⁸⁶ It is possible that the image of a menstrually polluted

Jesus was also readily useful to European Jews as a counter to Christian anti-Jewish polemic that, beginning in the thirteenth century, linked Jews to menstruation (thus negatively feminizing them) by positing that they bled anally either once a month or once a year as a result either of being cursed for their ancestors' involvement in Jesus's death or of eating a poor diet.⁸⁷ In the *Toledot*, Jesus is able to overcome the impurity of his origins enough to fly heavenward, but the incident merely provides another opportunity to connect him with inferior masculinity and pollution. The episode with Judas urinating or ejaculating on Jesus emphasizes masculine bodily fluids or, at least, the masculine capacity to aim while urinating, with Judas proving his greater masculinity while simultaneously polluting Jesus.⁸⁸ Jesus is thus polluted with every bodily fluid imaginable, but always in ways that emasculate him. Further, Judas's ejaculation adds a sexual element, implying that Judas sodomizes, or at least takes the dominant role in a same-sex encounter between himself and Jesus. This portrayal would have played upon European Christian fears and polemic about Christian priests' (and Christian heretics') sexual transgressions, whether by nightly emission or by sexual relations with members of either gender, as well as negatively valuing exegesis that portrayed Jesus and monks as motherly-feminine.⁸⁹ Thus Jesus is conceived as the result of an illicit, impure sexual relationship, and is destroyed by an illicit, impure sexual relationship. In all three traditions such associations rendered him the very opposite of a holy man—namely, one who was pure, sexually restrained, and claimed his power from the divine.⁹⁰

The narratives of the *Toledot Yeshu* were rich in counterexegesis, primarily against Christian assertions about the Virgin Mary, Jesus, and those rulers or saints who supported Jesus, such as the Roman Empress Helene. Part of the power of the *Toledot Yeshu* was that, as a predominantly oral tradition, it was infinitely mutable, and thus easily adapted to the polemical needs of the teller-writer in multiple religious and geographic milieux. This flexibility is especially well exemplified in the shifts in the Jewish retelling of the finding of the cross as it appears to have developed in Babylonia and traveled westwards, always in "dialogue" with the threads of Christian narrative to which it was intended as an answer. The development of imagery in the *Toledot* regarding Mary and Jesus's body, sexuality, and death is more difficult to pinpoint geographically and chronologically. Nevertheless, what should now be clear is that it would have resonated in both the Middle East and Europe among Muslims as well as Christians were they to have become familiar with it, and some

certainly did. For the Jews who transmitted and heard these tales, the *Toledot Yeshu* seems to have both entertained and served to preserve the boundary between Jews and those who accepted Jesus's divine mission, whether as a prophet and holy man, in the case of Islam, or the Messiah, in the case of the various Christian communities.

11 Sons of God, Daughters of Man, and the Formation of Human Society in Nahmanides's Exegesis

Nina Caputo

Jewish biblical exegesis in the Middle Ages was necessarily a fully dynamic process by which teachers and leaders announced their commitment to a worldview, a set of moral, philosophical, historical, or political principles that could be used to govern human society and individual actions. Yet it was also potentially a fraught project for Jews in medieval Europe. Any interpretation that tread too heavily on Christian views of scriptural truth could be—and indeed often was—seized upon by Jewish opponents as heretical and by Christian leaders as blasphemous. By design, exegesis makes claims intended to shape ethical and practical understandings of man's position in the world. Jewish and Christian claims to truth and correct interpretation of scripture offered a site where these theological differences could be expressed in more subtle and perhaps persuasive terms.

This essay examines Nahmanides's interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4, a perplexing yet enticing biblical passage that tells of the union between *benei ha-elohim*, the sons of God, and *benot ha-adam*, daughters of men, and of their offspring, a passage that engendered highly creative commentary among commentators in late antiquity. I focus on this biblical passage because Nahmanides's commentary allows a glimpse of his conception of human physicality, historical change, and, I will argue, a subtle refutation of the Christian understanding of the fall and human morality as well as a corrective to the dominant mode of Jewish interpretation.

As I and others have argued elsewhere, an uneasy “interfaith” intimacy under the Crown of Aragon helped shape Nahmanides's understanding of revelation and history both in opposition to Christian theology and hermeneutics and at times in their image.¹ Jewish exegesis became an issue of distinct significance for Christians in thirteenth-century Aragon

and Nahmanides himself was an important figure in the effort to negotiate around Christian perceptions that Jewish interpretations might impinge upon Christian readings and practices of scriptural meaning. Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 never emerged as a site of contention in the records of his polemical engagement. Nevertheless, his interpretations of this text ventured onto potentially dangerous ground by formulating an argument that expressly denied the Christian claim that Jesus was the sole human being in possession of divine parentage.

Three threads of argument combine in the course of his exegesis to support his interpretation. The first emerges from the hermeneutic process by which he interprets the term *benei ha-elohim*. Nahmanides's approach is distinct from other commentaries on this verse insofar as he identifies Adam, Seth, and Enosh, rather than the generic group of notable men identified in much medieval commentary, as the sons of God indicated in Genesis 6. This argument is determined by the chronological order of the narrative as well as Nahmanides's conception of the biblical text as possessing a single, meaningful, and organized narrative voice. Second, in spite of his highly chronological and contextual interpretation of the passage, Nahmanides identifies idolatry, a vice that had not yet been introduced in the course of the biblical narrative, as the immediate cause for both God's curtailment of the human life span (described in Genesis 6:3) and the mass punishment of mankind with the flood, two instances in which divine punishment was meted out in this brief narrative. And finally, Nahmanides claims that the most correct interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 is that it details the exploits of fallen angels on earth. Though this reading borrows from a very well-known tradition, Nahmanides's endorsement of this tradition as a legitimate or appropriate reading of the text puts him in conversation with Christian theologians who concerned themselves with the nature of angels.

Like many of his precursors—both Jewish and Christian—Nahmanides views the characters in Genesis 6 in clearly human terms. And yet, his interpretation does open the field to a more complex reading, allowing for the acceptance that these creatures possessed superhuman qualities as well. Undergirding his argument is the deep conviction that the history conveyed in Genesis is the history of all human beings. As such, an understanding of how the earliest men negotiated their relationships with other humans and with God could provide useful information to Jews of Nahmanides's time that might help guide humans to proper action and

ultimately to hone the qualities defining “people of renown (*anshei ha-shem*) in every generation” since the time of the flood.

Reading Genesis 6:1–4

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God (*benei ha-elohim*) saw the daughters of men (*benot ha-adam*), that they were good; and they took as wives all those whom they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always exist (*yadon*) in man, for he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. There were *nefilim* in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men (*gibborim*) of old, men of renown [Gen. 6:1–4].²

On its own, Genesis 6:1–4 poses several exegetical challenges. These four enigmatic verses serve as a bridge between biblical “prehistory” and biblical history. Positioned between an extended genealogy of Adam and his offspring that ends with Noah, on one end, and the story of the flood as punishment for human sin on the other, the story of *benei ha-elohim* reads as an awkward diversion from the narrative and chronological continuity of the Genesis story. It introduces a cast of mysterious characters who have no apparent relationship to the early generations of humanity introduced in Genesis 2–5, or to the story of the flood as punishment for man’s sin, which immediately follows. At the conclusion of Genesis 6:4, God has cut human beings down to size by curtailing their life span, and has established clear boundaries between the human and divine domains, at which point the interrupted narrative of Noah resumes.

Presented quite suddenly and without any introductory preamble, *benei ha-elohim* appear to be semidivine creatures who, attracted to the daughters of man, were drawn into the human drama. As a consequence, they end up populating the earth with the offspring of these relationships—*gibborim*—who “became the mighty men of old, men of renown.” The divinity of *benei ha-elohim* seems to be confirmed in the structure of the passage. Immediately following the introduction of these creatures, the narrative voice passes to God, who asserts that “my spirit shall not always exist (*yadon*) in man, for he also is flesh.” This statement, connected in grammatical terms to the previous assertion, reads as a response to the commingling of divine and human beings, suggesting, perhaps, that

God's disappointment with man was a direct response to the union between *benei ha-elohim* and *benot ha-adam*. Furthermore, without providing any explicit information about who they were or where they came from, Genesis 6 informs the reader that *nefilim* were on earth at that time. The narrative finally returns to the solely human sphere in verse 5 with God's sudden recognition that humans had descended irreparably into wickedness.

Since the narrative provides no context for or introduction to *benei ha-elohim* or *nefilim*, exegetes have struggled to find a contextually suitable interpretation of these brief verses. A consensus has emerged among modern scholars that these characters may be a residual echo of a long-forgotten "mythological" layer of narrative that had largely been expunged from the text.³ However, Genesis 6:1–4 presents traditional exegetes with very different challenges. Viewing the Torah as a communication between God and his people, traditional readers must seek a way to understand this text as meaningful both regardless of and because of its position in the biblical corpus.

The nonchalant manner in which the biblical narrative presents superhuman or possibly mythical creatures in Genesis 6 seems to demand clarification. The structure of the text provided a legitimate canvas on which early exegetes painted wildly creative interpretive novellas filling the narrative gaps. The most innovative and enduring examples of such interpretation were penned during the Second Temple period. The Septuagint, for example, attempted to nail down a taxonomy for the open-ended *benei ha-elohim* and *nefilim*. At the first appearance of *benei ha-elohim* (Gen. 6:2), the Greek text offers a subtly interpretive translation of the term as "angels of God," then the more directly literal translation "sons of God" in the second instance (Gen. 6:4), while both *nefilim* and *gibborim* are conflated into the category of giants.⁴ The Greek translation of Genesis 6:1–4 thus leaves the reader with the vague impression that the world was populated by a combination of celestial, mythical, and human creatures engaged in a dynamic power struggle.

Though the Septuagint necessarily leaves the identity and motives of the angels and giants ambiguous, several roughly contemporaneous apocryphal traditions gave voice to what was likely a closely related interpretive tradition.⁵ Stories of the Watchers, preserved in the *Book of Enoch*, Ben Sira, Philo's *The Book of Giants*, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, reveal an elaborately developed apocalyptic saga that adds lavish detail to the mere outline presented in the biblical text.⁶ The drama revolves around angels,

known as Watchers, who descended to earth (whether through force or choice), mated with humans, unleashed a wave of evil directly reflecting forces of temptation and sin that lures mankind away from the path of righteousness, and also disseminated new forbidden fields of human knowledge. As Archie Wright has noted, “the Watcher tradition represents a type of biblical synthesis and exposition; it is the ‘superimposition’ of negative traditions onto the relatively neutral position of Genesis 6:1–4” to account for the origin and impact of evil in a human environment created and ruled by a benevolent God.⁷

But while the Watcher tradition exerted great influence during the Second Temple period, there is indication that a substantial opposition had coalesced around combating this tradition following the destruction of the Temple. A large proportion of rabbinic commentaries and translations in late antiquity overtly dismiss every reading that figured *benei ha-elohim* as anything other than solidly human creatures. To tame the apocalyptic impulse that a literal interpretation of *benei ha-elohim* might support, *Targum Onkelos* grounded the drama in the thoroughly human domain. Here, *benei ha-elohim* is rendered as “sons of great men (or princes) (*ravraviya*)” and *nefilim* as *gabriya* or “mighty ones.”⁸ *Bereshit* [Genesis] *Rabbah* applies the same strategy to eliminate any hint of divine or superhuman creatures: “R. Simeon ben Yohai called them the sons of nobles; [furthermore], R. Simeon cursed all who called them the sons of God. . . . Now why are they called the sons of God? R. Hanina and Resh Lakish said: Because they lived a long time without trouble or suffering. R. Huna said in R. Jose’s name: ‘It was in order that men might understand [astronomical] cycles and calculations.’”⁹ The curse attributed to R. Simeon makes explicit what remained unstated in both the bulk of the rabbinic commentary and in the *targumim*: The interpretation of Genesis 6 presented in the *Book of Enoch* and other commentaries on the Watchers provided a powerful and compelling accounting for human sin and suffering, but one that posed a threat to rabbinic teaching and authority.¹⁰ Moreover, it provided precedent for the claim that divine progeny played a decisive role in shaping human history, a claim that proved uncomfortable for Jewish and Christian commentators alike.

The effort to defang the literal sense of this biblical passage either in the Hebrew original or in the Greek translation was, in the long run, largely effective. Most medieval exegesis repeats the rabbinic rather than the apocryphal or pseudoepigraphal interpretation of Genesis 6. However, a version of the Watcher tradition was preserved in *Pirqei de Rabbi*

Eli'ezer (*Chapters of Rabbi Eli'ezer*), an early medieval commentary on Genesis. Though modern scholars dispute this provenance, medieval commentators read *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli'ezer* as a product of the great second-century scholar, Rabbi Eli'ezer ben Hyrcanos.¹¹ Its running “narrative” commentary on Genesis brings together a midrashic style of exposition, often focusing on the literary and lexicological structure of the biblical text, with diverse extrarabbinic traditions. It reproduces the saga of the fallen angels in a concentrated and revised form and embeds the story of the *nefilim* in an exegetical retelling of Genesis and biblical history as a whole. Though reference to the fallen-angels tradition can be found in other medieval midrashic works, such as *Midrash Tanhuma*,³ the theme is not as well developed there.

The early history of interpretation of this passage, and most especially the Watcher tradition, placed a heavy burden on future commentators on this text. Even as what came to be the normative readings of this text dampened down the more satisfying, more exotic interpretations, those traditions continued to influence what readers saw in Genesis 6:1–4.

Nahmanides's Reading of Genesis 6:1–4: *Benei ha-elohim* and the Image of God

The correct interpretation in my eyes is that Adam and his wife were called *benei ha-elohim* because they were made by His hands and He was their father, and they had no other father besides Him. And Adam sired many sons, as it is written, “he fathered many sons and daughters” [Gen. 5:4]. These people who were the first born of a mother and a father were of great perfection from [their] height to [their] strength, since they were born in the image of their father, as it is written of Seth: “and he fathered [a son] in his own image, after his likeness” [Gen. 5:3]. Thus it was the case that all of the early men—Adam, Seth, Enosh—were called *benei ha-elohim* because these three men were in the image of God, but when the practice of idolatry began they became like [other] men who were weak and feeble.¹²

As is the case throughout his exegesis, Nahmanides distinguishes between multiple separate but intertwined senses of the biblical text at hand. On the poles of interpretation are the *peshat*, or plain sense of the text, and the *sod*, or the hidden meaning.¹³ To arrive at the plain sense of Genesis 6:1–4, Nahmanides reiterates the mere outline provided by the

biblical narrative: "When the scripture mentions Noah and his sons and wants to introduce the matter of the flood, it said that as soon as the sons of man started to multiply, they started to sin, and their sin continued for a long time, until Noah was 480 years old."¹⁴ Thus, it was decreed to them by God that his "'spirit would not exist in them forever,' but he would stretch their years further for them until they filled their measure, for this was the judgment of God."¹⁵ This retelling answers a question that guides most medieval exegesis of this verse: Why did God see fit to interrupt the flow of history first by limiting the human life span and then by wiping the earth clean with the flood? By raising and answering this question, Nahmanides makes a clear statement that Genesis 6:1–4 is an essential part of the Noah story, not just a narrative digression. He thereby explains to his reader that this text is worthy of close examination because Genesis 6 is the concluding chapter of the creation story involving distinctly *human* beings who were marked by the gift of God's direct favor, not an isolated episode involving semidivine beings who have no bearing on the rest of human history.¹⁶

Though Nahmanides establishes that attention to narrative chronology is essential for understanding the sense of this passage, he postpones giving identity to *benei ha-elohim* until his explication of Genesis 6:4, the second point at which *benei ha-elohim* appear. This strategy provides first a foundation for a dismissal of previous readings and then for identification of foundational questions. He starts by trying to determine what distinguished *benei ha-elohim* from other creatures who populated the earth, then moves on to name Adam, Eve, Seth, and Enosh as the biblical characters who were *benei ha-elohim* in a strict sense. That Nahmanides hoped to challenge normative interpretations of Genesis 6 is immediately evident in the structure of his commentary. His explication of Genesis 6:2 opens with a quote from *Bereshit Rabbah* as presented by Rashi: "*Benei ha-elohim*: Sons of ministers and judges; this is the view of Rashi, and so it [also] says in *Bereshit Rabbah*. If so, then scripture tells that it was incumbent upon the judges to uphold the law among them [i.e., their descendants], who were overtly doing violence without hindrance."¹⁷ Struggling to preserve a strict absolute monotheism, even as the text itself apparently posits other divine beings, *Bereshit Rabbah* and Rashi both offered a reading of *benei ha-elohim* based on the meaning of the term *elohim* elsewhere in the Bible to refer to lords or governors. These men were entrusted to execute justice, a divine quality, upon other men.¹⁸

Nahmanides's interpretation builds from a more literal understanding that focuses on the meaning of fatherhood and takes into account the formation of inherited physical qualities. Accordingly, he recognized the earliest human beings as the only creatures whom God "fathered." Having been formed in God's image, Adam and Eve were God's children; Seth too, since the Bible states that he was formed in Adam's likeness; and finally Enosh as well, as Seth's only named son.

Thus it was the case that all of the early men—Adam, Seth, Enosh—were called *benei ha-elohim* because these three men were in the image of God, but when the practice of idolatry began they became like [other] men who were weak and feeble. . . . It says that it was during the first generations when they were called *benei ha-elohim* in the complete perfection of their being that they fathered the *nefilim* with the daughters of man, and also afterwards, because the *nefilim* themselves fathered *nefilim* from them.¹⁹

Beginning with the fourth generation of human beings, as sin and idolatry became increasingly common, human action and the physical environment in which it took place had a marked and observable impact on the physical bearing of mankind.²⁰ Each successive generation, he argues, was physically smaller, less perfect than the last, hence they were called *nefilim*.

At first glance, Nahmanides's attribution of divine paternity to the earliest generations of men appears neither startling nor remarkable. Indeed, it seems perfectly consistent with a literal reading of the narrative of the creation of man as the only creature formed in God's own image. It is noteworthy in part, though, because Nahmanides's inclusion of Enosh among those closest to God departs from the convention established in *Bereshit Rabbah* of reading Enosh as the inventor of idolatry, rebellion, and blasphemy.²¹ At issue for Nahmanides is how having been created in the "image of God" distinguished those biblical figures who enjoyed the privilege of divine heritage and how unique characteristics were passed from generation to generation. Since the first mention of Enosh is embedded in a genealogy of Adam (Gen. 5:1–11) in which only Adam and Seth are described as having born children in their own image, the interpretation in *Bereshit Rabbah* assumes that only Adam and Seth might be direct heirs to the divine image. The exclusion of Enosh from the cohort of early men who were formed in the image (and likeness) of God assigns to him responsibility for darkness and evil. As Steven Fraade has shown, this was a departure from prerabbinic Jewish interpretations,

which recognized Enosh as God-like in his exceptional piety. Several early Christian exegetes shared this view and included Enosh among the few antediluvian men who transcended the tarnish of the fall.²²

Nahmanides, however, reads this passage in a more expansive manner to include Enosh among the direct heirs to the divine image because he was Seth's only named progeny. As one of those select few, he argues, Enosh signals the end of an early phase of creation when human beings were clearly marked as divine. The implications of this argument are significant. He suggests that both the physical and the spiritual manifestations of God's image as bestowed through divine patrimony were issued with a relatively short shelf life. Nahmanides does not seem to be suggesting that the qualities of God's image were fully erased in subsequent generations, but rather, that the intensity of the family resemblance significantly diminished over time. He emphasizes the placement of this verse chronologically in order to make a clear case for his literal reading, which implicates the generation of Enosh's children for inventing and spreading idolatry. Human moral and physical health entered a period of decline at that point, which was only stabilized at the time of the flood.

Violence and Idolatry Made Men Small

Nahmanides's explanation of Genesis 6:1–4 points to and lingers on one significant lacuna in the text. Whereas the biblical narrative clearly states that *benei ha-elohim* and *benot ha-adam* commingled, it is not clear that these relationships transgressed any known injunctions. Here Nahmanides offers a subtle refutation of an interpretation he attributes to Abraham ibn Ezra, which argues that God limited the human lifespan as a punishment for the tendency among *benei ha-elohim* to take sexual favors through violence: "Rabbi Abraham argued that it means to say 'my spirit will not stand in man forever because of this violence.'²³ Nahmanides's interpretation stems from a close reading of Genesis 6:2, which is typically understood to mean "the sons of God saw that (*ki*) the daughters of man were good (beautiful) and took them as wives" (*va-yiru benei ha-elohim et benot ha-adam ki tovot ve-yeqahu lahem nashim*).²⁴ Most readers understand *ki* as a conjunction describing qualities or conditions that distinguished all of the daughters of man. However, Nahmanides suggests *ki* should be understood as a conditional modifier: "if the daughters of man were good (beautiful), they took them as wives."

Once framed in the conditional sense, Nahmanides argues, it becomes clear that these women were taken by force of violence. “The scripture tells of the violence, and it says more: *from any that pleased them*, coming [to them] as the wives of other [men]. But the explanation in the scripture does not make it clear that this was prohibited to them, and the punishment [for taking these women as wives] was not decreed to them, only the [punishment for] doing violence.”²⁵ Of concern to him is the fact that the biblical narrative indicates that God had prohibited violence against other men but had not prohibited sexual relations between the sons of God and the daughters of man. Nahmanides thus challenges the argument that curtailment of the human lifespan was punishment at all:

In my view the truth says “my spirit will not remain in man forever, because of the fact that man is also flesh like all flesh of those that creep on the earth and the birds, and the beasts, and the living creatures, we are not worthy to be of the spirit of God in its essence.” The meaning says that “God made man upright” [Eccles. 7:29] to be like the ministering angels in the spirit (*ruah*) that He gave to him, and thus it continued after the flesh and in the physical limitations “he is likened to the beasts that perish” [Ps. 49:13]. Therefore, “the spirit of God shall not dwell in man forever” because he is corporeal, not divine.²⁶

For Nahmanides, the limitation of man’s lifespan to 120 years should not be understood as an expression of divine anger, but rather as a step toward fixing the nature of human physicality. The withdrawal of God’s breath-spirit thus represents a vital step in the extended process of creation whereby the very terms of divine paternity echo a familiar human sense that the necessity for parenting recedes as the child reaches maturity. Thus Nahmanides replaces the narrative of sin and retribution, advanced by *Bereshit Rabbah* (Bereshit, 26, 6), Rashi, and Abraham ibn Ezra, among others, with a narrative of the (d)evolution of the human species to its proper place among creatures of the earth, including the qualities of morbidity, mortality, and immorality.

Having earlier dispensed with the claim that the limitation of the human lifespan was a form of divine punishment, Nahmanides is then left to explain what had changed since that time to merit the flood, an instance in which the text makes it clear that God’s actions *were* precipitated by human wrongdoing. For Nahmanides, idolatry is the moral partner to the hereditary physical decline that resulted from the mixing of *benei ha-elohim* and *benot ha-adam*. In spite of his attention to maintaining

chronological literalism, Nahmanides disrupts this chronology by introducing idolatry as a factor contributing to man's physical decline. He makes a very subtle but important revision here. Most medieval exegesis attributes the instigation and dissemination of idolatry to Enosh based on the first mention of his name in Genesis 4:26: "As for Seth, to him, too, a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. It was then that the name of the Lord was first invoked." Nahmanides, however, clearly locates the beginning of idolatry in the generation that followed Enosh and attributes its spread to the *nefilim*. "When the practice of idolatry began they became like [other] men who were weak and feeble." He continues:

[The *nefilim*] recognized that they were not like the sons of the other humans. Only to the *benei ha-elohim* were they born, for they were very large, but they were inferior (*nefilim*) to their fathers in terms of height and strength . . . and they were heroes (*gibborim*) in relation to the rest of the sons of man. It says that it was during the first generations when they were called *benei ha-elohim*, in the complete perfection of their being, that they fathered *nefilim* from the daughters of man, and also afterwards, because the *nefilim* themselves fathered children who were inferior to them. The interpretation of *from time immemorial* is that after the flood when the people saw and recalled the *gibborim*, they said there were already heroes "in the ages before us" [Ps. 1:10] and there were people of renown (*anshei ha-shem*) in every generation thereafter. This is the plain meaning (*peshat*) of this portion.²⁷

In this reading, Nahmanides situates the moment of indiscretion among the *nefilim* in a time when a select elite among human beings possessed physical signs of divine attributes. *Benei ha-elohim* are presented as those who were, on account of their parentage, superior in stature, strength, and possibly even morality. In contrast, the signs of human passions were inscribed on the bodies of their offspring: They became diminished of size, strength, and eventually lifespan as well. This transformation is indicated in both narrative and lexicology. Nahmanides read the noun *nefilim*, 'those who fell', as an adjective, 'those who were inferior'. Both human frailties and divine attributes persist through the course of history accounting for the influence of saints and sinners during every generation, though the divine qualities become more unique and uncommon, in Nahmanides's view, with each generation.

This argument reveals some important assumptions about the quality of divine paternity and, more specifically, about the relationship

between human physicality and morality.²⁸ Until this point in the biblical narrative, human action had twice been deemed punishable. In the first instance, Adam and Eve disobeyed a divine order not to consume fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and in the second, Cain, compelled by jealousy, disposed of his brother Abel. Punishment in both cases included exile, which helped advance the conditions necessary for human civilization as it would develop in the postdiluvian era. And the punishment was imposed in response to individual acts to serve as an object lesson for future generations. The limitation of man's years seems to serve a different function since it affects all human beings. Indeed, Nahmanides argues, divine paternity was a quality shared to a greater or lesser degree by all human beings as a result of the union between sons of God—those whom the Bible credits as having been born in the image of God or Adam—and daughters of man—whom the Bible does not name. After the fourth generation, when the offspring of these couplings began presenting distinctive physical characteristics, different classes or genera emerged among humans. Nahmanides seems to be suggesting that these inherited vestiges of the divine image eventually evolved into the qualities that distinguish great leaders—*anshei ha-shem*—through the generations.

Pirquei de Rabbi Eli'ezer: The Return of the Fallen Angels

Bringing his systematic commentary on Genesis 6:1–4 to a conclusion, Nahmanides notes that his careful explanation of the connections between *benei ha-elohim*, *benot ha-adam*, and *nefilim* represents the plain or simple meaning of the text. But, he tells his reader, the secret or full sense of the text can be found in the commentary on fallen angels in *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli'ezer*: “the *midrash* of the great Rabbi Eliezer in his commentary on angels that fell from their holy place in the heavens is the most suitable of all to the language of the scripture, as the *gemorah* in tractate Yoma notes as well, but it would be necessary to expand on the secret of this at great length.”²⁹ Assuming that his reader possesses an intimate knowledge of the text, Nahmanides leaves off without reproducing that narrative, so a brief summary of the tradition is in order here. Chapter 22 of *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli'ezer* develops a narrative of the angels who fell to earth and the consequences of their intrusion in human affairs. The passage opens with an interpretation of Genesis 5:3: “And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and he begot a son in his likeness after his im-

age and he called his name Seth.” The author notes that early humanity comprised two classes of man: the descendants of Seth—“all the generations of the righteous” who were born from the seed and in the image of Adam—and the descendants of Cain—wicked and rebellious sinners who were spawned of mysterious non-Adamic seed. The children of Cain, who were thoroughly immodest, “walked about having revealed their nakedness, both men and women, like animals. And they sinned with every [sort of] fornication, man with his mother, daughter, sister-in-law, or the wife of his neighbor and with every evil inclination conceived in their hearts.” Some angels “who fell from their holy place from the heavens saw the children of the generations of Cain revealing naked flesh and painting their eyelids blue like prostitutes and strayed after them and took wives from among them.” Their giant, demonic offspring spread sin and violence on the earth, which God hoped to expunge with the flood.³⁰

This interpretation of early human history as a contest between the strict morality of the line of Seth and corruption of the line of Cain as embodied in the offspring of these unions found first expression in early Christian commentary. Responding to the same interpretive challenges that motivated their Jewish counterparts, many Christian exegetes sought to erase any interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 that read *benei ha-elohim* as a concrete reference to divine patrimony. Augustine played a leading role in this shift. The fact that the Septuagint offered two different translations of the Hebrew phrase *benei ha-elohim* signaled to Augustine that an allegorical interpretation was appropriate.³¹ He first posed the question whether angels, as spiritual beings, “could possibly have bodily intercourse with women.”³² His negative response simultaneously undercut and challenged the very qualities of angels on which the Watcher tradition and a literal reading of the Septuagint rested.³³ For Augustine, the dual Adamic lines produced the population for the heavenly and earthly domains—the descendants of Seth in the former and the descendants of Cain in the latter.³⁴ His determination of their human character emerges from three intertwined arguments: The first is a hermeneutic one that invests the very order of verses with significance and meaning; the second emerges from his understanding of the incorporeal nature of angels; and the third is based on empirical observation of human society as evidence that giants can be borne of two human parents. Augustine’s very practical formulation of this interpretation endured as the model for Christian exegesis of Genesis 6:1–4 through the Middle Ages.³⁵

However, while the effort to deflect attention from a literal understanding of the term “sons of God” (or, in Augustine’s case, even “angels of God”) became a dominant thread in Christian exegesis, a second strand of exegesis based on the Septuagint translation and the Watcher tradition once again began to animate the interpretive imagination of Christian exegetes during the High Middle Ages.³⁶ Systematic reflection on the nature of angels—and especially of fallen angels—emerged as theologians began reading scripture and theology through the lens of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure, to name just a handful, bring Genesis 6:1–4 as a proof-text to support an effort to accommodate biblical language depicting angels engaged in thoroughly corporeal activities—wrestling, eating, or copulating, for example—to Neoplatonic principles about the hierarchical relationship between spirit or intellect and body.

These pointedly rational commentators positioned themselves between Augustine and the Watchers in their approach to Genesis 6:1–4. Thomas Aquinas, for example, subscribed fully to Augustine’s argument that angels were absolutely and necessarily incorporeal.³⁷ However, he parted ways from Augustine in that he seems to have accepted without question the view that the *fili Dei* in Genesis 6 were fallen angels and their offspring demons who behaved as tormentors of men.³⁸ In spite of their spiritual superiority to men, angels are incapable of successfully bridging the material gap between spirit and flesh. They are forced to rely on subterfuge and manipulation to accomplish the physical acts, such as procreation, that Thomas believes Genesis 6 attributes to them.³⁹ Thomas thereby reserves the categories of Incarnation and divine progeny for Jesus alone, while at the same time securing a place in the spiritual life of Christians for angels.

There are some important points of intersection here with Nahmanides’s approach to Genesis 6:1–4. Like his Christian contemporaries, Nahmanides also positions his reading somewhere between the tradition of the fallen angels as presented by *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli’ezer* and the more normative readings presented by *Bereshit Rabbah* and the medieval exegetes. Since he declines to elucidate his understanding of the commentary provided in *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli’ezer*, it is impossible to reconstruct the details of this portion of Nahmanides’s exegesis with certainty. However, his reference to the Babylonian Talmud (“in tractate Yoma”) provides a hint that he was alluding to the tradition (obliquely referenced in BT Yoma 67a) that identifies the *nefilim* as fallen angels or demons named

Uza and Azael (or Azazel, in other sources) whose children, the product of sexual unions with human women, helped to lead human society astray.⁴⁰ Whether he was fully aware of developments in Christian exegesis is not clear. But it is clear that he and the scholastics were participating in a shared conversation about the impetus toward evil or sin and tensions between the mundane world, inhabited by men, and the world of spirit, inhabited by angels.

While he marks this approach as “the most suitable” to the language of the Torah and implies that a secret is embedded in the prooftexts, his interpretation according to the *peshat* is, to my mind, more interesting in that it offers a more radical critique of Jewish and Christian commentary on this biblical passage. The broader implications of Nahmanides's commentary on Genesis 6:1–4 warrant closer examination. His interpretation according to the *peshat* makes the surprising claim that *benei ha-elohim* were, in literal, physical terms, the children of God. As such, he advances an argument that risks providing precedent and legitimacy to Christian claims about Jesus's divine parentage: If the Torah admitted to divine progeny at the time of creation, what is to say that God might not repeat the experiment? Though argumentation based on this passage does not seem to have found a place in the canon of Hebrew or Latin proof-texts that animated polemical discourse, I would suggest that Nahmanides offered a fairly powerful polemic against Christianity through a careful, chronological exposition of the final phase in the creation of human society.

Interpreting this biblical text in the second half of the thirteenth century, Nahmanides contributed to a very long tradition of exegesis, much of which had self-consciously retreated from an understanding of *benei ha-elohim* as an allusion to divine, semidivine, or angelic creatures. But his reading, which diverges significantly from accepted rabbinic (not to mention patristic) interpretations, views the early history of man as a history of human culpability for the positive and negative changes that took place with the rise of civilization, which is plotted out in detail throughout Genesis. Whereas the Christian understanding of the fall universalizes human sin and depravity, Nahmanides presents a commentary that universalizes divine attributes as well as their gradual eclipse due to the weaknesses of individual human beings.

His approach builds upon a conceptualization of the inclination toward good or evil as an inborn trait that passed from parent to child during the antediluvian generations, resulting in a second, more devastating

temptation of righteous men—*benei ha-elohim*—by idolatry. Nevertheless, Nahmanides ventured into potentially dangerous territory with his claim that the act of creation made God the father of early men in practical as well as rhetorical terms. Having set the precedent for human progeny of God, he also opened the door to criticism by Jews and Christians. Christian exegetes shied away from “literal” interpretations of *fili Dei* for fear of challenging Jesus’s distinction as the sole son of God. At the core, Nahmanides’s reflections on these verses point to the challenge of reconciling human flesh and divine spirit in a theology that fundamentally denies to the divine any human qualities, whether emotional or physical.

12 Late Medieval Readings of the Strange Woman in Proverbs

Esperanza Alfonso

Representation of the feminine in two polarized ways is predominant in the Book of Proverbs. Essential to one of these poles is a figure commonly described as the “strange woman” (*ishshah zarah*). Conventionally, Proverbs 2:16–22; 5:1–23; 6:20–35, and 7:1–27 are associated with her. Coincidentally, descriptions of the wicked woman as a deep pit in 22:14 and 23:27 are seen as brushstrokes adding to her picture.¹ As described in these passages, the *ishshah zarah* further shares a common profile with the personification of Lady Folly (*eshet kesilut*) in 9:13–18. At the opposite side of the spectrum stand the “wife of your youth” (*eshet ne'urekha*; Prov. 5:18), the “woman of strength” (*eshet hayil*, Prov. 31:10–31), and Lady Wisdom (*hokhmah* [pl. *hokhmot*]; Prov. 1:20–33; 8:1–36 and 9:1–6)—figures generally considered to embody values antithetical to those of the strange woman.²

In none of the above passages concerning the strange woman is the nature of her strangeness made explicit. The biblical text leaves it open to two possible literal meanings: that she stands for the wife of another man, or else a foreigner. The language invoked to describe this woman, however, immediately invites a metaphorical reading, in which the nature of strangeness is identified with either an alien culture or the worship of other gods.³ In the latter reading, the relationship between husband and wife translates into the relationship between Israel and God. In this gendered metaphor, the notion of an exclusive relationship, the anxiety to define sexual boundaries, the idea of either divorce or reconciliation, and the concepts of honor, betrayal, punishment, and forgiveness appropriate to the source domain (husband and wife), would map onto the target domain (Israel and God) and would aid comprehension.⁴

Vacillation and ambivalence between literal and metaphorical sense, already operative in the biblical text, did not disappear from the interpretation of these passages in postbiblical times; on the contrary, such ambivalence was clearly present and was exploited to the utmost.⁵ Both the sages and later Jewish scholars, often navigating the literal/metaphorical dilemma, thus strove to pin down the nature of the *ishshah zarah*'s strangeness, producing a multiplicity of often overlapping interpretations.⁶

This paper seeks to contribute to the history of interpreting this biblical figure in the Middle Ages. It will explore the ways in which medieval Jewish authors propounded a concrete way of reading these passages and at the same time advocated specific moral and/or social behavior, always prompted, and at the same time conditioned, by hermeneutical tradition, as well as by cultural, social, and historical change.

Both axes, hermeneutics as well as cultural and social grounding, are naturally aligned in two well-known passages that invoke specific verses in reference to the *ishshah zarah*, or the women associated with her in Proverbs, in order to oppose a certain historically contextualized cultural practice. These two passages will help to introduce the ensuing discussion. The first one is included in *Mamad ha-talmidim* (*The Goad of Students*), a collection of model sermons by the thirteenth-century preacher Jacob Anatoli, active in Provence and Italy. In one of these sermons, Anatoli appeals to Proverbs 6:27 ("Can a man conceal fire in his breast without burning his clothes?") to rebuke his audience for paying heed to the "songs of the uncircumcised," which in his view were "nothing but lechery and obscenity" and necessarily lead to a laxity of sexual standards.⁷ In this sermon, Anatoli, through a gender shift, likens the effect that sleeping with a prostitute has on a certain male with the ill effect that singing the songs of the Christians may have on a Jewish female.⁸ Simultaneously, he projects the figure of the harlot in Proverbs onto that of contemporary Jewish women.⁹ The passage is to be set within the framework of a polemical rivalry between Judaism and Christianity, where Christian culture is seen as a threat to the community and imagined as a potential aggressor against Jewish women's honor.

The second passage relates to the harsh dispute that the thirteenth-century scholar of Ashkenazi origin Asher ben Yehiel (Rosh, d. 1327) held with his contemporary, the communal secretary Israel Israeli in Toledo. In that dispute, by way of reference to Proverbs 2:19 ("All who go to her cannot return and find again the paths of life"), the former mapped the

effects of going after the strange woman onto the effects that pursuing philosophy has on men. The use of this metaphor, this time with no gender shift since the pursuit of philosophy is an exclusively male concern, is again to be read against a specific cultural background. Asher ben Yehiel, a renowned halakhic authority, was speaking against the use of philosophy as a tool for passing judgment in *halakhah* (religious law).¹⁰ Israel Israeli was, in Yitzhak Baer's words, an intellectual of aristocratic lineage well versed in Islamic philosophy who, in advocating just such a use, opposed Yehiel.¹¹

The following pages intend to expand the search for medieval readings of the strange woman into medieval linear commentaries that cover, verse by verse, all the passages concerned with her. I will focus on the work of two roughly contemporary authors from the first half of the fourteenth century—Joseph ben Joseph ibn Naḥmias, and Levi ben Gershom (Gersonides)—as well as two other presumably roughly contemporary writers from the second half of the fifteenth—an anonymous exegete likely of the generation prior to the expulsion, and the very well-known preacher and exegete Isaac Arama.

The first of these authors, Joseph ben Joseph ibn Naḥmias, was active in the first half of the fourteenth century in Toledo.¹² A student of Asher ben Yehiel, he was well acquainted with Talmudic texts, and an inheritor of the long-standing tradition of grammatical, exegetical, and belletristic literature in the Iberian Peninsula and Provence. As in his other surviving biblical commentaries, in the pertinent verses of Chapters 2, 5, and 6 in Proverbs, Ibn Naḥmias puts forth a twofold interpretation of the *ishshah zarah* that alternates between a literal and a metaphorical reading.¹³ In the passages under examination, he typically comments on specific terms, providing biblical proofs, and appealing to medieval and rabbinic authorities.¹⁴ Following the twelfth-century Provençal exegete Moses Qimḥi, he says “a wicked woman is called *zarah* and *nokhriyyah* [figuratively] insofar as she behaves as if she were *zarah* and *nokhriyyah* on account of her nation and her birth (on Prov. 2:16–17).”¹⁵ When in Proverbs 2:16 the biblical text indicates that “she forsakes the companion of her youth,” Ibn Naḥmias reads the line as making reference to her husband, and when scripture next says that she “disregards the covenant of her God,” the author, after Joseph Qimḥi (c. 1105–c. 1170), interprets this to be her marital bond, as established in Malachi 2:14. That is, both in Chapter 2 and in the remaining passages, when commenting on the text according to its most immediate meaning, Ibn Naḥmias identifies the

strange woman with a Jewish woman, not with a foreigner. The only exception to this rule is a brief comment at the end of Proverbs 2:17, a comment that lays down a warning: “Know well that . . . if on account of this woman you accept strangers (*zarim*), on account of these strangers you will accept other gods ([*elohim*] *aherim*).”¹⁶ The only point at which Ibn Naḥmias displays an interest in elucidating the precise identification of this woman arises in Proverbs 5:24–29 and then 5:32, where he tries to establish a difference between verses referring to either the married woman or the wicked unmarried one, but in neither of these cases does he seem to refer to foreigners.

In view of the above, it is clear that, from a literal viewpoint, Ibn Naḥmias reads the strange woman in Chapters 2, 5, and 6 as a wicked Jewish woman. When shifting to an interpretation of the same passages according to—in his words—*midrash*, he largely follows those rabbinic readings that mapped the opposition between legitimate wife and *ishshah zarah* onto an opposition between the Torah and heresy.¹⁷ In this second layer of meaning, Ibn Naḥmias particularly draws from the Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 17a, and in doing so he is likely influenced by the eleventh-century northern French commentator Solomon Yizḥaki of Troyes (Rashi).¹⁸

In Chapter 7, Ibn Naḥmias introduces a change with respect to previous chapters (2, 5, and 6) and, exegetically, he proceeds in a slightly different vein. In this case, he comments on the whole chapter according to its *peshat*, appealing occasionally to rabbinic sources as part of this literal reading, and at the end he observes that Maimonides wrote that this passage in particular, and all passages in the book concerning the *ishshah zarah* more generally, are to be read in reference to matter, so that Solomon’s aim would have been to warn man not to pursue the pleasures of the body. Ibn Naḥmias further identifies matter with the appetitive soul (*ha-nefesh ha-mit’awah*). Along these lines, he argues that the verse, “For the man of the house is away” (Prov. 7:19), is to be understood, according to this Maimonidean perspective, as referring to the human intellect. Should one follow Maimonides, the opposition between husband and wife would be mapped onto that existing between the intellect and matter (*ha nefesh ha-mit’awah*).¹⁹ In sum, Ibn Naḥmias’s reading of the sections on the *ishshah zarah* brings together three different strands of interpretation. These strands had typically run separately, although previous commentators, among them David Qimḥi (c. 1160–c. 1135)²⁰ and Menaḥem Me’iri (1249–1316), both in Provence, had already provided si-

multaneous alternative readings of the *ishshah zarah*. Ibn Naḥmias's *peshat* reading is an inheritor to the Sephardic and Provençal traditions of interpreting the passages concerning the *ishshah zarah*. In addition to the Qimḥis (whom Ibn Naḥmias does not credit), he explicitly quotes from Sa'adiah Gaon (882–942), Judah ibn Quraysh (ninth century), Samuel ha-Nagid (993–c. 1055), and Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1164), by whom he actually refers to Moses Qimḥi (d. c. 1190).²¹ In turn, his allegorical reading of the text, which heavily draws from rabbinic sources, might well be an inheritor to Rashi, an author who had influenced Ibn Naḥmias in a variety of ways and from whom he often quotes verbatim. However, it is to be noted that, unlike Ibn Naḥmias, Rashi's commentary relied consistently and overwhelmingly on the identification of the *ishshah zarah* with heresy, and heresy with Christianity. Thus, Rashi reads “lets you give your vigor to others” (Prov. 5:9) as worshipping other gods, “your years to a ruthless one” (Prov. 5:9) as a reference to the prince of Gehenna, “strangers who sated on your strength” (Prov. 5:10) as the prophets of Ba'al, who collect money with their lies and their hastiness, “the house of another” (Prov. 5:10) as those who practice idolatry, and “for the man is not at home” (Prov. 7:19) as a sign that God has expelled the *Shekhinah* and has given all good to idolaters.²² None of these explicit allusions and this strong evocation of Christianity are found in Ibn Naḥmias's commentary. As for the third layer in his commentary, which reads the strange woman as a philosophical concept, it is limited to a paragraph summarizing Maimonides's interpretation of the *ishshah zarah* as conveyed in the introduction to the *Guide*. Here again, the minor status given to philosophical allegory is noteworthy, as this exegetical mood had prevailed among thirteenth-century exegetes when reading the pertinent passages. The three exegetical strands are thus filtered to better fit the cultural and historical specificities of fourteenth-century Castile, where under the magistracy of Asher ben Yehiel, Ibn Naḥmias's teacher, the exegetical tradition from al-Andalus opened up to new trends coming from Ashkenaz and Provence, at a time when polemics seem not to have dominated the Jewish–Christian encounter.

While Ibn Naḥmias had no predilection for philosophical allegory, the opposite was true for various other authors in the Provençal and Catalono-Aragonese areas. These were Zerachiah ben Shealtiel Ḥen (thirteenth century), who wrote a commentary on Proverbs around 1288, and Baḥya ben Asher (thirteenth century), who touched upon the subject of the *ishshah zarah* in *Kad ha-Qemaḥ* (*The Flour Jar*, a collection of sermons) and in

his biblical commentaries. Closer to Ibn Naḥmias's time, authors continued to engage with the concept of Maimonidean allegory, either to oppose this reading, as was the case with Joseph ibn Kaspi (1279–1340), or to endorse it, as with Gersonides (1288–1344). While the former advocated a reading of the text as *peshat*, along the lines of ethics, the latter, the well-known philosopher and exegete born in Languedoc and active in Orange and Avignon,²³ systematically and consistently read the text according to its inner meaning: that is, as philosophical allegory.²⁴

According to Gersonides's reading of Proverbs, in this book Solomon makes observations in the area of morals and ethics—for the benefit of the masses—and speculative observations concerning human perfection for the philosophically minded.²⁵ His interpretation of Proverbs 2:16–19 sets out terms for the remaining passages and encapsulates the way in which philosophers approached the text. The *ishshah zarah* is for him the appetitive soul (*ha-nefesh ha-mit'awah*), which is strange (*zarah*) and foreign (*nokhriyyah*) to man inasmuch as it is not what defines his nature as man. Commenting on 5:3, he first identifies the *ishshah zarah* with the imaginative faculty of the soul, which is subservient to the intellect and yet induces man to error so that he indulges in his desires, abandons wisdom (*hokhmah*) and moves away from perfection; yet next, Gersonides admits that the former identification (between the *ishshah zarah* and the appetitive soul) is still preferable. All elements in the remaining passages consistently revolve around this conception. Thus, “the companion of her youth” (Prov. 2:17) is the intellect (*ha-sekhel ha-enoshi*). Similarly, “the cistern and the well” (Prov. 5:15) from which man is admonished to drink represent the intellect, or alternatively “the cistern” stands for imaginative forms (*šurot dimyoniyot*) and sensuous perception (*hasagot ha-ḥushim*) and “the well” for intelligibles (*muskalot*).

When the *peshat* slips in, as when commenting on Chapter 6, the *ishshah zarah* is for Gersonides a prostitute (*zonah*) who awakens man's animal instincts, and a married woman (*eshet ish*) who is forbidden to him. Here again, as in Ibn Naḥmias, the strange woman is not a cultural or a religious other, but a married one, who will lead man to destruction, to be punished by her husband and dishonored by those he knows. In his commentary, Gersonides delves deeply into philosophical allegory, which Ibn Naḥmias had barely mentioned in passing, and explores it in its full dimension. When Ibn Naḥmias reads the strange woman either as the wicked [Jewish] woman or as a symbol for heresy, Gersonides reads it as a wicked woman, or as a symbol for the appetitive soul, identified with

female nature. Neither scholar, in turn, constructs this biblical figure as a symbol for the polemical confrontation between Christianity and Judaism.

Ibn Naḥmias's and Gersonides's commentaries represent two significantly different and yet roughly contemporary approaches to the *ishshah zarah*, written in Castile and Provence respectively, and they both stand in sharp contrast to the fifteenth-century samples I will present in what follows. The next two commentaries are difficult to date, but are in all likelihood roughly contemporary. The first one is the commentary on Proverbs extant in MS Sassoon 559, which to date remains unpublished. The second is the linear commentary written by Isaac Arama.

Very little work has been done on MS Sassoon 559.²⁶ The manuscript, on paper and containing 252 folios, is written by three Sephardic hands dating back to the late fifteenth century. It lacks incipit and colophon and nothing is known about its author, nor about the place of its composition. The commentary has been connected to pietistic and ascetic circles active in the peninsula before the times of the expulsion. The entry in Sotheby's catalogue briefly indicates that the author quotes *heikhalot* literature (concerned with the "heavenly palaces"), Rashi, and the late thirteenth-, early fourteenth-century Italian kabbalist and halakhic authority Menahem ben Benjamin Recanati, while at the same time criticizing those who study philosophy, particularly Talmudic scholars who boast of their learning of secular sciences.²⁷ To the best of my knowledge, it is the only linear kabbalistic commentary on Proverbs written on the Iberian Peninsula. This hermeneutical mood clearly determines the author's reading of the strange woman. No clear distinction is made in it between different layers in the text. Unlike all prior commentators, the author strongly associates the strange woman with the *niddah* (menstruant).²⁸ He further imagines her as Samael's wife, a defiant slave girl (*ha-shifḥah ha-sorerah*), and an adulteress, as well as the serpent who tempted Eve, the symbol of all evil inclination. In sum, he sees her as representing the demonic feminine, the shadow side of the *Shekhinah*.²⁹

As in other kabbalistic works, the demonic feminine is here associated with "strange fire" (*esh zarah*), signifying idolatry. Hence, in Proverbs 2:16, for example, the author recalls the passage in Leviticus 10 where the sons of Aaron offered before the Lord strange fire, which He had not enjoined upon them, so that fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them. The *Zohar* makes this connection between the strange fire in

Leviticus 10:1 and the strange woman of Proverbs 7:5 explicit, as does this text.³⁰

The *ishshah zarah*—the author continues to argue—drags man’s heart to the ways of idolatry, clearly meaning Christianity. Commenting on Proverbs 2:17, the author states: “Idolatry (*minut*) drives [men] to talking about adultery, and adultery drives them to drinking wine, and drinking wine leads to the destruction of the soul, so that in the same way that this woman abandons the companion of her youth, who is her husband, so heretics abandon the companion of their youth, which is God,”³¹ and in a slightly different order, when commenting on Proverbs 23:30: “Wine drives men to prostitution (*zenut*), and prostitution drives men to witchcraft and to idolatry.” In these passages the association of idolatry and Christianity is strengthened by the reference to drinking wine, as the etymology of Edom, the medieval symbol for Christians, is said to be *adom* (‘wine’).³²

Against this backdrop, the text repeatedly refers to those who, by ignoring all future retribution, embrace mundane, bodily pleasures. By admonishing them, and indirectly giving them a voice, the unknown author also reveals real arguments and concrete cultural and social anxieties. Commenting on Proverbs 5:20–21, he states:

Because at the End of Days, these good things that are [now] secret and concealed from you will ensue for you. Why be infatuated, my son, with idolatry and clasp the bosom of an alien woman [*nokhriyyah*] since embracing an alien woman is like embracing idolatry. Do not say that all these good things that are the goodness of the World to Come are very far off, at the very end of time, while idolaters enjoy all the good and pleasure of this world, such that you say: “better the little goodness nearby than the great goodness far removed,” that you want to enjoy this world much so as to achieve two worlds, this world and the World to Come. You should know that *a man’s ways are before the eyes of the Lord* [Prov. 5:21] and man is not given the World to Come according to the evil he did but for the good intentions by which he fulfilled the Divine Commandments.³³

From this passage it is clear that the author of the text reads the strange woman as a foreigner who inevitably leads to idolatry, clearly described as conversion to Christianity. This exegetical choice, which had been marginal in the work of previous commentators, is here brought to the fore and strongly emphasized. The punishment awaiting those who indulge

in bodily pleasures or engage with the *ishshah zarah*, and all that she represents, is thus described in harsh, vivid terms. The author's comments on Proverbs 5:10–11 are a token of this:

Lest strangers eat their fill of your strength [Prov. 5:10]. . . . When a man has forbidden sexual relationships with women, he will be measured with the same measure, as strangers will possess his wife. *And your toil be for the house of a foreign man* [*nokhri*] [Prov. 5:10]. The money that he toiled to amass, and the house to build, and the vineyard to plant, and the field he toiled to sow, will be ruined, while the stranger will eat and drink his honor, his glory and his wealth. *And in the end you roar* [Prov. 5:11]. You will roar when you see all this with your own eyes. *When your flesh will be consumed* [Prov. 5:11], as the officers of the Gehenna will make you incarnate and bring you to your house where you will see with your own eyes how a foreign man possesses your wife, and after seeing that, they [the officers of the Gehenna] will bring you back so that your flesh will burn in the Gehenna, and they will incarnate you again in order to punish you even more.

Comparison between this text and the one by Jacob Anatoli mentioned above immediately brings to the fore similarities and differences that reveal a completely different construction of the context by both authors. Writing in thirteenth-century Provence and Italy, Anatoli likens the effects that chasing prostitutes might have on a male to the effects that singing the songs of the uncircumcised (clearly Christians) might have on contemporary (Jewish) women. At the same time, by means of an intertextual reference to Leviticus 19:29, he identified the harlot in Proverbs with contemporary Jewish women seduced by Christian songs. The author of the fifteenth-century anonymous commentary portrays a Jewish male who goes after the strange woman, understood literally as a foreigner, and metaphorically as Christianity. Unlike Anatoli, he is not criticizing a foreign cultural practice but warning against the dangers of conversion to Christianity, and the total effacement of Jewish identity. The *Shekhinah* / *ishshah zarah* polarity, and the multiple-level play of antagonistic associations that this pair generates in the text, served well the interests of an author whose work is to be understood against the ascetic, pietistic backdrop of the generation prior to the expulsion, and who probably wrote in Castile. The encounter between Judaism and Christianity is here a violent clash, which is projected onto a battle of cosmic proportions between Good and Evil. Where threats to the Jewish community are described in

terms of possession of a man's wife, a rhetorical shift occurs that responds to a double change in the hermeneutics of the text and in the social and political conditions of the time.

Roughly contemporary to this unknown author, Isaac ben Moses Arama (c. 1420–94), who wrote his commentary in Aragon, followed a different path when approaching the passages on the *ishshah zarah*. His was, however, also a path that betrayed the fears and anxieties of his time and place. Of the four authors discussed in this essay, Arama is undoubtedly the one who is best known as a historical figure. The fact that he and his family are documented in archival material facilitates the task of exploring the way in which this commentary on Proverbs constructs a specific historical background.³⁴

In the introduction to the commentary, and again when commenting on Proverbs 2:17, Arama argues that man has two different wives or partners: The first is born with him as a female match, and the second is the (real) wife he takes later on in his life. The first, God's choice, is in charge of man's intellect; the second, of his own choosing, is his real match in life and is in charge of his well-being. Both, Arama remarks, can be either good or bad and can have a positive or detrimental influence on him.³⁵ The *ishshah zarah* incarnates the negative side of both women.

From a hermeneutical stance, Arama explicitly opposes Maimonides for despising the most obvious meaning of this figure and interpreting it exclusively in accordance with its deeper meaning—that is, metaphorically—in his introduction to the *Guide*.³⁶ In the reading he propounds, Arama argues that the most obvious meaning serves us in our daily life and the deeper meaning enriches spiritual life. Accordingly, he goes back and forth from one level of meaning to the other as he comments on the text.³⁷ Arama hence opposes the transitory life of the body and the eternal life of the intellect and the soul, mapping out this opposition to an antagonistic relationship between the study of philosophy and the study of Torah. This opposition becomes particularly apparent in Proverbs 5:9, a verse I have previously used as a sample. Commenting on this verse Arama states:

Lest you give up your vigor to others [Prov. 5:9]. This means that these matters [meaning those involved in the study of philosophy] entail a great deal of work, and that this work will not result in your benefit. The study of these [philosophical] matters will not improve your soul and you will not derive anything from them other than to raise up and exalt gentile

sages in the streets and the markets, filling with pride over them, saying: “This is Abū Naṣr’s and Alexander’s knowledge; it is the knowledge of Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, and other commentators of Aristotle’s works.” This [and only this] would be the essence of your vigor and your glory.

By contrast with the strange women, “the water of your well” (Prov. 5:15), and the “wife of your youth” (Prov. 5:18) represent the study of Torah. Exclusive dedication to her as recommended in the biblical text is moral advice to which philosophers, Arama says, remain deaf.

There is no question that identification of the *ishshah zarah* with foreign wisdom, and specifically with philosophy, was one of the commonest choices available in the symbolic repertoire throughout the Middle Ages, as evinced in the thirteenth-century responsum by Asher ben Yeḥiel referred to above. However, it is not the choice itself that grounds Arama’s interpretation in its time and place but rather the radical changes he introduces in the division of the text, and the rhetoric of the association.

In Chapter 7, according to his twofold interpretation of the text, he describes the *ishshah zarah* as the seductive, adulterous, married woman who, in the absence of her husband, lurks at every corner and brings men to her house (according to the most immediate meaning); and as a harmful kind of matter that takes one form after another only to abandon each (according to the deeper level of meaning), along the lines of Maimonides’s and Gersonides’s works. At the end of Chapter 7, however, and unlike all other prior commentators, Arama speaks of a third woman, far more dangerous than the two previously described, a woman who in his view is responsible for the speeches in Proverbs 8:1–11 and 9:1–6, which tradition attributed to Lady Wisdom.³⁸ In these two passages, he says, it is not Lady Wisdom calling, but philosophy. In his explanation Arama clearly correlates the ways of the deadly harlot who roams the city in search of a prey with whom to spend the night with those of philosophy’s supporters, roaming the city and making simple men fall into their traps. The metaphoric domain of seduction and prostitution hence translates into that of teaching philosophy. On Proverbs 8:2, he states as follows:

[The passage] recalls [philosophy’s] deceits and words to seduce man after the example of how prostitutes make themselves heard to do their work [Exod. 36:2]. In a similar vein, those who support her [philosophy] go out, lurk [at every corner] and speak seductively before simple men, and tender and brainless children [saying:] “Why do you need to know the laws

of *shekhitah* [‘ritual slaughtering’] and *bediqah* with Abbaye, Rava, and all the other Talmudists? Go and learn splendid philosophy [*hokhmah mefo’eret*] with Aristotle, his companions, and their commentators.” Then they put in front of them some beautiful *derushim* [‘postulates/theses’] in such a way that their hearts are strongly driven towards their delicacies.

Furthermore, Arama rearranges Chapters 8 and 9 as a disputation of sorts between philosophy and Torah, where the former presents its principles and lays out the benefits stemming from the different branches it encompasses (Prov. 8:1–11; 9:1–6) and the latter presents a general counterargument and refutes, point by point, philosophy’s claims.³⁹ This gendered metaphor is particularly interesting if we remember that written polemics were the domain of men, and that women were notoriously absent from them.⁴⁰

Arama, more than any of the authors discussed above, involves himself in the reading of the biblical text. His concern for the literal and the way he draws attention to the moral benefits of the text at the superficial level seem significantly in keeping with his social attitudes as a preacher and a moralist in late fifteenth-century Aragon. In *Aqedat Yizḥaq* (*The Binding of Isaac*, the commentary he wrote on the Torah), in fact, he recalls the harsh debate he held with the leaders of the Jewish communities who not only allowed the establishment of brothels but even subsidized this measure.⁴¹ At the metaphorical level, he maps the harlot and the woman who fears God onto the opposing pair of philosophy and Torah.⁴² Hence, the public disputation that philosophy and Torah hold in front of the community, the exposition of arguments, and the clear rebuttal, point by point, as well as the Torah’s compassion and mercy for the simple-minded among her own who had let themselves be snared in the traps of foreign wisdom, all portray the community’s fight against radical allegorists among its own, who are perceived and portrayed as a threat to the integrity of the community’s boundaries. Furthermore, the pair of philosophy and Torah becomes, in turn, the source domain for another metaphor, that representing Arama in opposition to Christian preachers. The opposition between Torah and philosophy (held within the community) is thus projected onto the backdrop of the current and worsening Christian–Jewish confrontation.⁴³ The fact that Christian preachers summoned people to hear their discourses is well known, and there is proof that Arama, who was conversant with scholastics, felt as fascinated

and seduced by their learned content as he felt repelled by the aim they pursued, since he showed high regard for Christian preachers, while also holding public disputations with them.⁴⁴

From the above pages, it is clear that both hermeneutical tradition and cultural and social change were decisive in selecting a specific reading from a repertoire, and in creating new meaning. The interplay of both coordinates (hermeneutics and socio-cultural change) turns the selected passages into cultural constructs in which the treatment of the strange woman has powerful social implications. In interpreting it, exegetes advocate a particular reading of the text, and call for action in moral behavior. From a hermeneutical view point, the preferences of the four authors under examination here have come one by one into the open, dictated in each case by the world they inhabited. In that world, late medieval Iberia, the rhetoric of anxiety over the breaking of community boundaries clearly intensified in the fifteenth century, at the literal level by identifying the *ishshah zarah* with any foreigner, and at the metaphorical by identifying her with Christianity. The attitude toward those who stepped outside the community in turn differed, partly as a result of the hermeneutical approach. While the unknown scholar who penned the text now extant in MS Sassoon 559 launched a fierce attack against those who converted, Isaac Arama instead offered them a warning, and sought every means to try to convince them to change their paths.

By focusing on these four late medieval readings of the *ishshah zarah*, and taking them as cultural constructs, I have tried to provide a modest corrective to the atomized, fragmentary treatment of isolated verses making up her biblical portrayal, the often historically decontextualized treatment of medieval readings of her figure, and even more broadly, the continued neglect of these commentaries in the writing of late medieval intellectual history.

13 Exegesis as Autobiography

THE CASE OF GUILLAUME DE BOURGES

Steven F. Kruger

Biblical exegesis is among the most impersonal of literary genres. Based firmly in the details of a preexisting text, and strongly respecting earlier interpretive efforts, medieval exegesis seldom values innovative reading for its own sake; rarely does the “I” of the exegete explicitly intrude into his text. Even when a particular piece of exegesis does make radical departures from its predecessors, its claim to value rests not on the fact of radical departure but rather on its correspondence to the truth of a tradition that has been ignored or buried and that now, through the exegete’s archaeological efforts, is brought to light.

It might seem perverse, then, to argue that we consider medieval exegesis as autobiography, were it not that, when we turn to medieval works of autobiography themselves, we immediately recognize their strong engagement with exegetical modes of thought. From the moment when Augustine in the *Confessions* responds to the command “Tolle, lege” (Take up and read), subjecting himself to the biblical text in a movement intimately tied to his conversion, exegetical scenes stand at the center of the Western autobiographical tradition.¹ Thus, Hermann / Judah’s twelfth-century conversion autobiography, framed as it is by the account of a single dream interpreted first in a Jewish and then, finally, in a Christian manner, relentlessly foregrounds the work of interpretation, and especially the ways in which the Jewish man, Judah, must learn to read scripture in a new—Christian, ruminative, monastic—mode before he can become the Christian Hermann.² Also in the twelfth century, Guibert of Nogent notes, at a pivotal point in his *Memoirs*, that he turns from writing frivolous poetry to “more appropriate exercises” through the discipline of exegesis: “I pored over the commentaries of scripture; I dug more deeply into the writings of Gregory . . . ; and finally, I closely examined . . . the

words of the prophets or of the Gospels according to their allegorical, moral, and anagogical sense.”³ Guibert depicts himself going to work on “a moral commentary on . . . the *Hexameron*” (the *Moralia Geneseos*), a project that Guibert assigns an ambivalent position in his autobiography: It grows out of his intellectual apprenticeship to Anselm of Bec, but it is also a project of which Guibert’s abbot strongly disapproves: “Seeing that my project amounted to sticking thorns into his [the abbot’s] eyes, I pursued my work secretly, taking care to avoid not only him but anyone who might relate my activity to him.”⁴

Guibert’s exegesis, then, clearly deserves attention for how it intersects with his autobiography. Indeed, Jay Rubenstein has read the *Moralia* as “a meditation on psychological thought as much as a meditation on Scripture,” arguing that the psychology developed here also informs Guibert’s *Memoirs*.⁵ One might suggest, of course, that the intimate way in which Guibert’s exegetical work intersects with his autobiography is exceptional, highlighting all the more strongly—because of its rarity—the largely impersonal qualities of medieval exegetical writing. But we might also ask whether exegesis like Guibert’s is less rare than generally recognized. How commonly might medieval exegetes examine their own authorial subjectivity through the seemingly impersonal itineraries of exegesis? These are the questions underlying the current essay. Here, I develop my argument not in a general way but with reference to one particular, little-known group of exegetical texts. My largest goal is to urge scholars of exegesis to consider the subjective, personal, even autobiographical possibilities of their material of study (including those that connect to the categories of gender and sexuality), to begin asking to what extent exegesis might present not just tradition-bound readings of distant, if culturally central, texts but also arguments about issues intimate to exegetes’ sense of their own subject positions at quite particular historical junctures.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Latin I82II, and Guillaume de Bourges

A fifteenth-century manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS latin 18211, foregrounds three exegetical works by an otherwise unknown thirteenth-century French Jewish convert to Christianity, Guillaume de Bourges.⁶ The manuscript, which includes mostly works with a significant exegetical component, announces from the outset an anti-Jewish and secondarily antiheretical program:

Guillaume de Bourges's opening polemical work, the *Liber bellorum Domini* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*), which mobilizes a wide range of biblical passages to prove Christian doctrinal positions and disprove Jewish ones.⁷

A homily on Matthew 2:1–11, also by Guillaume.⁸

A second homily by Guillaume, on John 8:1–6.⁹

A quirky exegetical work that treats each book of the Old and New Testaments by allegorizing its opening and closing passages; unattributed in the manuscript, the editor Gilbert Dahan concludes that this (and the three unattributed works that follow) are possibly but not definitely by Guillaume de Bourges.¹⁰

A brief treatise on the five senses, a work that, while not strictly speaking exegetical, reads each of the senses morally and frequently quotes scripture to support its readings.¹¹

A sermon for Holy Week that begins with the text of Psalms 7:12.¹²

A treatise “de corpore Christi,” which manifests at least some knowledge of Hebrew and which (like the *Liber bellorum Domini*) addresses itself to both Jewish and heretical disbelief.¹³

Isidore of Seville's *Epistola sancti ysidori ad florentinam* (*Letter of Saint Isidore to Florentina*)—that is, the influential anti-Jewish *De fide catholica contra Iudeos* (*On the Catholic Faith against the Jews*)—which of course mobilizes much scriptural material in support of its anti-Jewish program.¹⁴

The Franciscan Bertram von Ahlen's early fourteenth-century treatise on pseudo-Dionysius's mystical theology, entitled *de nouo seculo fratris bertranni de alen* in the manuscript.¹⁵

While an analysis of the whole manuscript and its program is desirable, here I focus only on the first three works, those clearly attributed to Guillaume de Bourges. Identifying himself early in the opening passage of the *Liber bellorum Domini* as “Guillaume, a deacon of Christ, formerly a Jew,” the author also immediately presents a brief account of his conversion: “Through the admonition of the blessed and exceptional confessor Guillaume, Archbishop of Bourges [Guillaume de Dongeon, archbishop 1199–1209; canonized 1218], [I] recently c[a]m[e] out of the shadow to the light of truth, which, namely through evangelical faith, ‘illuminates the whole world’ [see John 1:9].”¹⁶ As I will argue, Guillaume's three works constitute a certain kind of autobiography. More specifically, they construct an autobiographical defense of their convert-author's com-

petence as a Christian reader, securing his new Christian identity by demonstrating his exegetical skill. But that identity remains complex, bearing the marks of the convert's transitional status, a continued affinity with Jewishness that is both repudiated and acknowledged, and a Christian-ness that is both different from that of the "born" Christian and yet also, paradoxically, perhaps quintessentially Christian.

The manuscript's opening work of Christian exegetical polemic gives as its full title the *Liber bellorum Domini contra Iudeos et contra Hereticos* (*The Book of the Wars of the Lord against the Jews and against the Heretics*).¹⁷ Addressed to "all believing in Christ"¹⁸ it consists of the following parts:

The autobiographical prologue.¹⁹

A "Clavis libelli" (key to the book), which provides a sense of Guillaume's method and lays out in summary form the book's next section.²⁰

Thirty chapters that compose the bulk of the *Liber*.²¹

A scolding and hortatory "Letter to the Hebrews."²²

"Controversies between the Lord and the Jews," detailing forty-two of God's "beneficia" and the forty-two "evils" with which the Jews repaid him.²³

A brief concluding "Book against the Heretics."²⁴

In addition to identifying the author and briefly narrating his conversion, the prologue goes to some length to detail the situation in which the text was produced. Guillaume here notes that "certain faithful people who believe me to have advanced a little bit in knowledge of the Hebrew language" have asked him to compose "a book of disputation concerning our Catholic faith against the perfidy of the Jews." Their request emphasizes the need to turn a literal reading of Hebrew scripture back against the literal-minded Jews; Guillaume is to attend to "that which the Hebraic truth attests, so that concerning the truth itself that they [the Jews] keep in the obscurity of the letter, carnally, not truthfully and spiritually, they be confounded in both intellect and work according to the testimony of the letter itself."²⁵

Almost immediately, however, Guillaume introduces a wrinkle into the project; if his experience of Judaism and his expertise in Hebrew are viewed as benefits by some of his new Christian coreligionists, others show themselves to be more wary: "But 'unjust witnesses have risen up against me' [Ps. 26:12]."²⁶ They ask, "how dare you compose a book of disputation,

since you are a Jew and have only recently been baptized, and have worked hardly at all among the grammarians and the scholars? You are an ass; you are a dog.”²⁷ All of Guillaume’s writing can be read as responding to this challenge. There is an explicit, immediate response, which I examine more closely below, but one can see the whole of the *Liber* and the two homilies that follow as demonstrating Guillaume’s more than adequate preparation for the task of “compos[ing] a book of disputation concerning our Catholic faith against the perfidy of the Jews.” These works demonstrate, first, their author’s competence in reading Hebrew scripture, as one who “ha[s] advanced a little bit in knowledge of the Hebrew language”; second, his clear, orthodox understanding of the Old Testament evidence for Christian truth; third, an ability, despite the objection that he has “minimal” knowledge of the “grammarians and scholars,” to read Christian scripture, as well as a familiarity with postbiblical Christian doctrine and scholarship; and fourth, especially in the final sections of the *Liber*, his competency to act as an advocate for Christianity against both Jewish and heretical opponents, as well as his ability, demonstrated by the homilies, to address fellow Christians, accurately and persuasively, on exegetical, doctrinal, and moral matters.

The Convert’s Self-Authorization

Guillaume demonstrates his knowledge of Hebrew in the *Liber* in a striking manner. As he notes at the beginning of the “Clavis libelli,” “Therefore, so that the Jews not be able to deny the authoritative statements of the prophets pertaining to Christ, I have written all the capital texts in Latin letters and Hebrew words, just as the Jews themselves read, as I have been able, so that the Hebrew language itself in the authoritative statements is better expressed.”²⁸ Thus, for instance, as he takes up Genesis 1:26 to defend Christian belief in the Trinity, he includes not just the Vulgate text, but also a careful transliteration of the Hebrew: “O Jews, who until the present day have denied the holy and indivisible Trinity, do you not read that the Lord said before he formed Adam, *Naase adam besalmenu*, which is translated: ‘Let us make man to our image and likeness.’”²⁹

Guillaume’s treatment of Hebrew words and their meanings often depends on Jerome, or on other Christian exegetical and polemical works, but when he takes up linguistic complexities and points of controversy in the Hebrew that influence the interpretation, he treats not just familiar cases—e.g., the oft-repeated argument about the meaning of the He-

brew word *alma* in Isaiah 7:14 (“Behold a virgin shall conceive” [*Ecce virgo concipiet*]), in the Jewish reading, “adolescent girl” not “virgin”³⁰—but also less familiar ones. Thus, for instance, in considering the Resurrection, Guillaume develops a complex reading of the text of Hosea 6:3: “And the prophet Zechariah said: *Iehaienu miomaim*, which is, ‘He will revive us after two days, and on the third day, he will raise himself up,’ or ‘he will raise him up’ [Hosea 6:3]; thus it is in the Hebrew. Whence I marvel as much as possible how the interpreters have translated ‘he will raise us up,’ just as the Jews, compelled by necessity, impute, not believing that the Lord on the third day rises up, and not as they have it written.”³¹ Guillaume here not only critiques tendentious Jewish interpreters but also the Vulgate text, which in fact reads, “*suscitabit nos*” (he will raise us up).³²

In addition to demonstrating his expertise in reading Hebrew scripture, Guillaume also makes a limited use of Hebrew postbiblical interpretive traditions. For example, toward the beginning of his discussion of the Trinity, he refers to the Talmud (BT Sanhedrin 38b), “And your gloss says that God requested counsel and aid in making man,” and he concludes (based on a reading of Isaiah 40:13–14), “therefore your gloss is false.”³³ Unsurprisingly, Guillaume here mobilizes his Jewish knowledge only in order to turn it back against Judaism. His demonstration of Hebrew erudition, alongside his consistent rejection of traditional Jewish positions, comments implicitly on his personal history as a former Jew. And, in one rare instance, Guillaume makes this commentary explicit, showing how his own training reveals Jewish exegesis to be inherently obfuscatory: “When formerly I was reading the prophet Isaiah and I was a little Jewish boy, and I had arrived at this prophecy [Isa. 53:4–5], [my] depraved master said to me: My boy, he said, do not read this prophecy; truly it turns many Jews away from our law.”³⁴

Throughout his discussion, as is of course expected in this polemical genre, Guillaume uses his knowledge of Hebrew scripture to emphasize its fulfillment in the New Testament; doing so not only provides a strong anti-Jewish and persuasively Christian argument but also works toward proving Guillaume’s own worth as a Christian reader. Every Christian typological reading of Hebrew scripture that Guillaume brings forward confirms him as able to read spiritually not carnally, a standard marker of Christian–Jewish difference that Guillaume foregrounds from the very beginning of his work. Recall his opening contrast between Jews’ “keep[ing]” the truth “in the obscurity of the letter, carnally,” and Christian “truthful,” “spiritual” reading.³⁵ But Guillaume also demonstrates

his capacity for *allegoresis* in ways that are unusual and unexpected, not least strikingly in the very structure of the *Liber*. He notes, in the “*Claus libelli*,” his reason for dividing the work into thirty chapters: “And since the Jews through envy destroyed Christ [who was] turned over to them for thirty pieces of silver, therefore I have written for them thirty evangelical chapters confirmed through the Old Testament so that, believing in Christ, they understand the truth more fully.”³⁶

Guillaume’s thirty chapters are also organized in a way unusual in anti-Jewish polemic of the period, providing a particularly compendious treatment of Christian doctrine and of the New Testament fulfillment of Hebrew scripture. Following two chapters concerning the Trinity, the *Liber* embarks on a more or less chronological examination of the events of Jesus’s life and afterlife, as follows: two chapters concerning the Virgin Mary, baptism, and the conception of Jesus; three chapters on the Nativity, Bethlehem, the star, and the magi; a chapter concerning Christ’s miracles and the Transfiguration; a chapter on John the Baptist; a chapter on the she-ass and the foal; two chapters on Judas’s betrayal; eight chapters focused on the Passion and related events; two chapters on the Resurrection; a chapter on Christ’s journeys to Emmaus and Egypt; a chapter on the Ascension; one on Pentecost; one on the blessed apostles; one on the evangelists and the New Testament; and one on the Eucharist. The two concluding chapters, which reemphasize the work’s polemical thrust, stressing the supersession of Judaism by Christianity, treat first “the illumination of the gentiles,” and then, finally, “the blindness of the Jews.”

Such a structure is unusual in medieval anti-Jewish polemic, which instead tended to organize itself in a more pointed, less inclusive way, around particular controversial passages and matters of doctrine. As Dahan notes regarding Guillaume’s “methodical” examination of “the principal episodes of the life of Christ,” “Before Guillaume, . . . such an examination had never been made in such an exhaustive manner, only the Nativity and certain themes of the Passion having been treated.”³⁷ The particularly compendious nature of the treatment here seems intended to demonstrate Guillaume’s mastery of the whole of Christian doctrine and the entirety of the Christian narrative. We might even see the convert-author here engaging in an exegetical version of *imitatio Christi* or pseudo-Bonaventuran meditation on the life of Christ *avant la lettre*.

In keeping with this structuring of the *Liber* around the narrative events of the Gospels, Guillaume’s exegesis also tends to depart from the anti-Jewish polemical tradition in its use of proof texts. The Christian anti-

Jewish polemicist tends to delimit his view to Old Testament texts, acknowledging that Jews recognize their authority but not that of the New Testament.³⁸ As Guillaume himself declares: “Truly, since [the Jews] do not believe the holy Trinity and those things that the New Testament asserts, from the authorities of the Old Testament itself, on which they fallaciously depend, I have decided in explaining to support my purpose.”³⁹ But despite this conventional declaration that he will adhere to a delimited set of Old Testament authorities, Guillaume repeatedly introduces New Testament citations into his discussion, in a way that sometimes even threatens to turn attention away from the Old Testament prophecy of the truth to its more direct, New Testament demonstration. To take one of many instances, in his brief treatment of John the Baptist, the turn from Old Testament to New occurs in definitive fashion:

Concerning John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord, Isaiah prophesied: *Col qore banydbar*, that is, “The voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord” [Isa. 40:3]. And Malachi: “Behold I,” he says, “send my angel, [who] shall prepare the way before my face” [Mal. 3:1]. And further: “Behold, I will send you Elias [Elijah] the prophet, before the coming of the . . . day of the Lord . . . [so that] he turn the heart of the fathers to the children” [Mal. 4:5–6]. John himself is Elias, with our Lord testifying, who says: “if you will [know],” John “[himself] is Elias” [Matt. 11:14]. And further: “Elias is already come, and they knew him not” [Matt. 17:12]. . . . This is John concerning whom the Lord says: “‘there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist’ [Matt. 11:11]. . . . And the Lord added that ‘all [the law and the prophets] prophesied until John’ [Matt. 11:13], where it is to be understood in the greatest part, since afterward Agabus and the four daughters of Philip prophesied” [Acts 21:9–11].⁴⁰

Both Guillaume’s method and his goal here differ from those of other Christian anti-Jewish polemicists; a passage like this serves to demonstrate not only how Jewish scripture might be properly understood but also the author’s own competence in turning from the Old Testament to the New. It demonstrates, that is, the author’s own conversionary capacity, manifesting this in its own structure of citation as it moves from Isaiah and Malachi to the dense citation of Matthew and the easy final allusion to Acts.

Indeed, in this passage, the New Testament material threatens to overwhelm the Old, and not only does Guillaume show himself adept in

handling Christian scripture, he also incorporates Christian scholarly tradition, quoting (as Dahan has pointed out) the final sentences here from Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* (*Scholastic History*).⁴¹ In other passages, Old and New Testament texts merge as though seamlessly part of the same (Christian) account: "Concerning the mocking and the garments of Christ, David prophesied in the persona of Christ . . . 'They were separated, and repented not: they tempted me' [Ps. 34:16], saying: 'Prophecy [. . .], O Christ, [say] who [. . .] struck thee?' [Matt. 26:68]. 'They scoffed at me with scorn: they gnashed upon me with their teeth' [Ps. 34:16], saying: 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross' [Matt. 27:40]."⁴² Here, Matthew fulfills Psalms not only thematically but also grammatically.

The author's ability to read the Old Testament like and as a Christian and the tendency, even in the anti-Jewish polemic of the *Liber*, to turn to New as well as Old Testament proof texts give way in the two homilies that follow the *Liber* in BNF MS lat. 18211 to an even more explicit and extensive demonstration of the author's capacity for New Testament exegesis. Whether or not Guillaume himself put the three texts in their current manuscript order, as they stand, they develop an argument in which the initial engagement with Jewish positions and Hebrew scripture moves into a fuller, purer encounter with Christian texts and doctrine. The first of the two homilies, on Matt. 2:1–11, indeed foregrounds particularly the relation between Old and New Testaments at a moment (Epiphany) that emphasizes the shift from old to new, Jewish to Christian, a delimited, local religion to a universal, catholic church (represented by the magi). Its supersessionist thematics thus echoes the movement of the manuscript itself from the Judeo-centric *Liber bellorum Domini* to the New Testament homilies.

The *Homily* begins, in fact, with an explicit foregrounding of the harmony of the two testaments, in a discussion (dependent, as Dahan suggests, on Jacques de Vitry) not strictly necessary to the reading that is to follow: "With whole heart we must harmoniously join the New to the Old Testament to the honor of the Savior. Truly, not in vain did the Lord order Moses to make two cherubs facing each other, nor did he say [in vain] in Psalms: 'Deep calleth on deep, at the noise of thy flood-gates' [Ps. 41:8]. . . . Especially when he who is author of the New and the Old says: those things written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled concerning me [see Luke 22:37]."⁴³ From here, Guillaume proceeds directly to the opening verse of the Gospel passage,

emphasizing its fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 (“a [boy] is born to us and a son is given to us”).⁴⁴ The *Homily on Matthew* thus does work similar to that of the *Liber bellorum Domini*, confirming that Christ’s coming fulfills Old Testament prophecy, but now from the other side of the Old–New Testament divide. It then proceeds for the most part matter-of-factly, verse by verse, to explicate Matthew’s account of the three magi. In doing so, it relies on or echoes Jerome, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, Jacques de Vitry, Alain de Lille, and others, again emphasizing its author’s full enmeshment in a Christian intellectual, and specifically exegetical, community.

The *Homily on John* concerns itself less with the relationship between Old Testament and New, instead focusing on the development of a particularly intricate Christian reading of the Gospel text, John 8:1–6 (the woman taken in adultery). Here, the homily first lays out a full, literal, verse-by-verse exegesis of the scriptural text, developing a reading that emphasizes the conversionary status of the woman, and thus reminds us of the author’s identity as a convert, although this is not again made explicit in the text.⁴⁵ But when we might imagine that the exegesis has fully run its course, having worked through its literal account of the text, the homily returns to the beginning of the scriptural passage to reread it in a thoroughgoing, allegorical manner. The switch of interpretive mode is here foregrounded in an explicit call to “Go from the letter to the spirit, from the figure to the truth, from this world to the Father.”⁴⁶ By thus extending its reading and exceeding the kind of interpretation demonstrated in the *Homily on Matthew*, the *Homily on John* takes a further step toward showcasing its author’s thorough exegetical competence, his ability to move from the literal to the allegorical, and hence his full conversion from Jewish reader to Christian exegete. The convert-author here shows himself able to recognize the literal thematics of conversion in the story of the woman taken in adultery but also to read allegorically in such a way as to universalize the story’s significance, emphasizing finally the end-time conversion of “Synagoga” and calling on all of “us” to “hasten to enter God’s temple” through its “gate,” “the blessed Virgin Mary.”⁴⁷

Ultimately, then, Guillaume’s project, across his three exegetical works, is to justify his taking on the role of Christian advocate in opposition to both Jews and heretics—most explicitly and pointedly in the “Letter to the Hebrews” and “Book against the Heretics” that appear toward the end of the *Liber bellorum Domini*. Further, the very turn to homiletic writing, even as it demonstrates Guillaume’s competence in New Testament

exegesis, shows Guillaume able to address his fellow Christians in an authoritative pastoral manner.

Queer Identifications and Christian Identity

But if the *Homily on John* provides a kind of culmination to the strategy of self-authorization that organizes Guillaume's three works, the identification of the convert-author with which it leaves the reader is not simply "positive," but rather paradoxical and counterintuitive. In *John* and in Guillaume's reading of *John*, the position of the convert is occupied by the sexually transgressive woman, reminding us of the difficult position in which the convert continues to stand. The convert-author's implied identification, across gender, with a woman who stands humiliated and accused before her community, recalls the questions and accusations that the convert Guillaume introduces explicitly at the opening of the *Liber*, questions and accusations that seek to undermine the very project of writing upon which he is about to embark: "How dare you compose a book of disputation, since you are a Jew and have only recently been baptized, and have worked hardly at all among the grammarians and the scholars? You are an ass; you are a dog."⁴⁸

If, as Carolyn Dinshaw has argued, the Christian hermeneutics of allegorizing exegesis is inherently gendered, with the spiritualizing reading and "undressing" of a textual body a valorized masculine enterprise, and if, as Lisa Lampert has shown, a parallel gendering characterizes the Jewish-Christian debate, with Jewish readers identified with corporeal, literal (feminine) reading habits and Christian readers with spiritual, allegorical (masculine) ones, then essential to Guillaume's project is his self-presentation as a properly masculine reader.⁴⁹ And yet the culminating identification of the convert-author in the *Homily on John* with the woman taken in adultery, even as it allows the author's clear distinction from the learned but misguided (indeed conniving and violent) Jewish scribes and Pharisees, introduces a gender trouble into the text that returns us to the opening of the manuscript and its initial foregrounding of Christian objections to Guillaume's composing his anti-Jewish text. Framing the whole of Guillaume's corpus, then, are questions, explicit and implicit, about whether and how the convert—bodied forth in the *Homily on John* as the adulterous woman; identified as still Jewish, an ass, and a dog at the opening of the *Liber*—might ever truly occupy a properly Christian body and community.

The manuscript's opening accusation operates first by questioning Guillaume's competence, given his brief exposure to Christian learning, to work among the "grammarians and scholars," but that perceived deficiency is one that, by its nature, might be addressed in the course of time; Guillaume's production of the *Liber* and the two homilies—adequate "grammatical" and "scholarly" texts—addresses the objection effectively. But the second part of the attack operates in a more essentializing fashion, suggesting that as a Jew or former Jew, Guillaume is ontologically different and hence disqualified from speaking as a Christian. Why introduce this doubt at the beginning of the work and return to a formulation of convert identity, in the *Homily on John*, that might undermine its full reliability? In part, the opening questions provide a foil against which, as we have seen, Guillaume can demonstrate his exegetical prowess, and Guillaume's immediate response to the charges indeed provides an extended, virtuoso prolepsis of the exegetical skill that, in the work that is to follow, Guillaume will deploy in more systematic ways. At the same time, Guillaume calls attention more emphatically than necessary to the ambivalent nature of his position as a convert within his new Christian community. Indeed, Guillaume responds to the charges brought against him by the "unjust witnesses" not by denying them but instead by showing, through a complexly interwoven reading of scripture, that the abject identities his opponents assign him are ones that he might proudly embrace:

To whom I have been compelled to respond: "Certainly, most dear ones, 'I was the brother of dragons and companion of ostriches' [Job 30:29], and I took my origin from asses and dogs. But that one who made the blind see and 'the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak' [Mark 7:37], 'hath brought me up, on the water of refreshment; he hath converted my soul' [Ps. 22:2–3], and 'because I have not known letters, I [wish to] enter into the powers of the Lord' [Ps. 70:15–16]."⁵⁰

Here, rather than repudiating the identities of ass and dog, he embraces them, indeed intensifies them in their negativity through the quotation from Job, but then, invoking (as he will do in the *Liber* that follows) Old and New Testaments in concert, he reminds us both of the vanity of "grammarians and scholars" (*litteraturam*) in comparison to the "powers of the Lord" and of God's ability to work miracles, to "convert the soul." Guillaume's strategy here might be thought of as *queer* in the sense that the negative epithets used to discount the voice of the convert are

claimed and turned around in their meaning so as to construct a self-assured position of authority. He continues, in turn, to transform the terms of opprobrium employed by his detractors into more ambivalent markers of identity and ultimately markers that are to be recognized as not essentially Jewish (as Guillaume's detractors would make them) but rather quintessentially Christian.

Thus, again with reference to both Old and New Testaments, he first works to reclaim in a positive sense the identities of ass and dog:

If I am an ass, as you say, it is proper for me "[to know] the master's crib" [see Isa. 1:3] that my people did not know. If I am a dog, it is proper for me to proclaim the advent of Tobias, so that the blind man recover his sight [Tob. 11:15]. Likewise, if I am an ass, certainly you must spare me, since the Lord says: "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee [succumbing to his] burden, [help him]" [Exod. 23:5]. Do you not see Balaam the impious, that is the Jew or the Heretic, riding upon me, "whilst it is said to me" by them "daily: Where is thy God?" [Ps. 41:4]. Therefore that one who opened the mouth of the ass of Balaam [see Num. 22:28] is powerful to open my mouth and to say to him: "Why strikest thou me?" [John 18:23], "that [my] rider may fall" [Gen. 49:17] backward and Christ mount, whom we believe to have mounted on Palm [Sunday] on the foal of the she-ass [see Matt. 21:5]. If I am a dog, Ecclesiastes truly says: "A living dog is better than a dead lion" [Eccles. 9:4]; just as by the jawbone of an ass [Judg. 15:15-16] a thousand Jews, who are called asses, will be punished, awaiting even now the redeemer at the foot of the mountain with an ass [see Zech. 9:9], just so, "the many dogs encompassing" [Ps. 21:17] Christ will be punished by the living dog.⁵¹

The ass here is recognized as potentially burdened by error—ridden by "Balaam the impious, that is the Jew or the Heretic"—but also as susceptible to God's power and worthy of serving as the mount of Christ. The "living dog," though abject, is better than a "dead lion," and the dogs that stand for the enemies of Christ might be punished by that living dog as a figure for Christ. Dog punishes dog; the ass's jawbone strikes the Jews as asses. And both ass and dog might recognize the new dispensation: "the master's crib" or Tobias as a figure of Christ.

From here, Guillaume shifts register while extending his bravura exegetical performance: From the abject animals whose identities he embraces, he moves to think more directly about abject human beings, while also continuing to treat biblical animals, particularly now as these might

represent the objects of his polemical attack (Jews and heretics) but also, as in the treatment of the “living” ass and dog, as figures of Christian, spiritual victory:

It is not surprising if a strong, armed man overcomes the weak and infirm; but, if the weak and humble man shatters and overcomes the proud, then the victory thus manifested appears greatest. If David, little and the very least among his brothers, had not killed the lion and the bear [1 Sam. 17:34–36], certainly he would not have prayed: “God who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the [beast]” [1 Sam. 17:37], etc. Likewise, if David, a pastor of sheep, had not struck without arms the strong, armed giant, the women would not have sung: “Saul slew his thousands and David his ten thousands” [1 Sam. 18:7]. . . . By Goliath killed by David we must understand the devil slain by Christ. By the lion, the Jew, son of the dead “lion, ravening and roaring” [Ps. 21:14]; by the bear truly the Heretic, who desires to devour the honeycomb, which the strong lion, like Samson, has drawn out of the dead lion [Judg. 14:5–9].⁵²

In identifying his “weakness” with that of the underdog David (and paradoxically also with “the strong lion, like Samson”), Guillaume here definitively solidifies his position on the side of truth, mobilizing the Christian transvaluation of weak to strong for his own benefit. Indeed, at the end of the prologue, he can assert his position in straightforward fashion, with a clear profession of faith: “We truly, who from the true God triune and one have received holy baptism, firmly and faithfully believe the truth, which spits out all falsity and leads into all truth his faithful, [who are] about to receive in advance the true and endless rewards of truth for ever and ever. Amen.”⁵³

But the danger of Guillaume’s prior Jewish identity or current status as a convert is not necessarily wholly defused by this crafty exegetical response, and indeed, during the course of the *Liber bellorum Domini*, Guillaume potentially reactivates the essentializing attack of the work’s opening. This happens largely through a repeated return to the biblical meaning of the ass. On the one hand the text reminds us of the ass’s entwinement with the life of Christ, its positive role in revealing Christ’s presence and identity in the world. But on the other hand, the ass stands precisely opposed to Christian truth. Thus, immediately after asserting that the ass of Isaiah, who knows “his master’s crib” (Isa. 1:3), read alongside the injunction not to plow with an ass and ox together (Deut. 22:10), is to be taken as prefiguring the ass (and ox) who “recognize the Lord at

rest in the manger,” Guillaume notes that “mistic” [allegorically] the ox signifies the “good preacher” while the ass is “the idiot and the inexpert in letters, since not only is he useless in word, but by his depraved example corrupts others.”⁵⁴ Later, the ass takes up the more unambiguous, and literal, position of Christ’s mount as he enters Jerusalem.⁵⁵ But in the chapter immediately following this, we also read of Judas’s association with the ass:

But the patriarch Jacob openly prophesied concerning the traitor Judas, descending from the tribe of Issachar, saying, “Issachar shall be a strong ass.” [Gen. 49:14]. Gloss: Issachar is translated as “hire,” for which Judas, who descended from his stock, sold the Lord. And he is called “a strong ass,” because he was hard and a thief; as an ass he carried those things that were put therein [referring to the “loculos” (purse) of John 12:6].⁵⁶

Guillaume thus maintains, throughout the course of the three works collected in BNF MS lat. 18211, a certain dangerous, endangered self-positioning, even as the same sequence of works presents a strong argument for his own authority as Christian spokesman. These two seemingly opposed strategies can, however, be seen as working in concert if we recognize Guillaume as consistently reminding us that a true Christian identity is not firm, unassailable, and secure but rather that it depends upon a weakness that is true strength, the position of Christ himself under attack and yet ultimately triumphant. Indeed, in the remarkable penultimate section of the *Liber*, the “Controversie inter Dominum et Iudeos,” we even find Guillaume speaking in the first person *as* the calumniated Christ addressing the Jewish people: “O [my] people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I [saddened] thee? answer [. . .] me’ [Mic. 6:3]. / I avenged your innocents drowned by Pharaoh in the same manner. You truly murdered my innocents in Bethlehem and within all its borders.”⁵⁷

This continues, through the “forty-two benefits” the Lord performed for the Jews, which were paid back with evil, until Christ declares: “Your fathers held the figure of truth with love, but you detest the truth when you affirmed for yourselves that vile speech, saying twice: ‘Crucify, crucify him’ [Luke 23:21]. Therefore, I say twice to you, ‘Revert, revert, do penance, otherwise you will perish’ [see Luke 13:5.]”⁵⁸ Again, as in the larger structure of the *Liber*, centered on the events of Christ’s life, we might here see Guillaume finally as asserting the ultimate Christian identification, with Christ. And in reminding us repeatedly of his own convert identity we might see Guillaume also as asserting, even in the most

ambivalent movements of his texts, convert identity in its possible abjection as a true, even quintessential, Christian identity.

Exegesis as Autobiography

We can thus read Guillaume de Bourges's three works as representing one otherwise unknown convert's attempt to write himself into a secure position within the Christian community he has recently joined, in part through the paradoxical (queer) strategy of occupying the abject position into which his critics cast him in order to discredit his authority. The kind of work thus performed by Guillaume's writing is also taken up in a good number of other exegetical works produced by medieval converts to Christianity: Guillaume de Flaix's homilies, which have recently received a fine reading from Jessie Sherwood; Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogues*, which stage a debate, largely focused on the proper reading of scripture, between Peter's pre- and postconversion selves; the transcripts of the Paris, Barcelona, and Tortosa Disputations, which record the (again, largely exegetical) arguments of Jewish converts against their former coreligionists; Abner of Burgos / Alfonso of Valladolid's fourteenth-century *Mostrador de justicia* (*Teacher of Righteousness*) and the exegesis of the late-fourteenth-century Iberian convert Paul of Burgos (Pablo de Santa María), both of which Ryan Szpiech has recently examined.⁵⁹ One might see such works, along with Guillaume de Bourges's, as anomalous in the literature of medieval exegesis, as taking on a certain project of autobiography only because of their authors' status as converts. But the fact that a Christian writer like Guibert of Nogent also understands his exegetical writing as significant to his personal spiritual itinerary, and Jay Rubenstein's conclusion that "The ideas of . . . [Guibert's] *Moralia Geneseos* and . . . [his *Memoirs*] are the same, and the two texts can not be studied in isolation from each other,"⁶⁰ should give us pause and lead us to keep open the question of when precisely medieval exegesis might function as autobiography, just as medieval autobiography so often depends upon the exegetical.

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NOTES

Introduction

Ryan Szpiech

1. “Nam dicitur in capitulo de *Iona*: ‘Si fueritis in dubio de hoc quod reuelauimus uobis, petatis ab illis qui legerunt librum priusquam uos’. Illi autem qui prius legerunt librum quam saraceni sunt iudei et christiani, qui receperunt Pentatheuchum et Euangelium, sicut exponit Machometus. Ergo Machometus dicit saracenis quod petant a christianis et iudeis de dubiis. Sed quomodo mitteret eos Machometus ad mendacia testimonia si est propheta ueridicus, ut dicunt?” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS *Conv. soppr. C* 8.1173, fol. 189r. See J.-M. Mérioux, “L’ouvrage d’un frère Prêcheur florentin en orient à la fin du XIII^e siècle. Le ‘Contra legem Saracenorum’ de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce,” *Memorie domenicane* 17 (1986): 1–144 (text on 60–142). An English translation can be found in Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Refutation of the Koran*, trans. Londiniensis (n.p.: Londiniensis, 2010), 19. On Riccoldo, see Thomas Burman, “Riccoldo da Monte di Croce,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4: 1200–1350, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 678–91.
2. Conference participants who did not contribute to this volume include: Jonathan Decter (Brandeis University), Benjamin Braude (Boston College), Piero Capelli (Ca’ Foscari University, Venice), Deena Klepper (Boston University), Ari Geiger (Bar-Ilan University), John Dagenais (UCLA), Luis Girón-Negrón (Harvard University), Noah Gardiner (University of Michigan), and Catherine Brown (University of Michigan).
3. For more information on the project, see the website <http://www.lineas.cchs.csic.es/inteleg>.
4. Other examples include Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern, eds., *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange: Comparative Exegesis in Context* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds., *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); and Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

5. It thus approaches exegesis according to the model of studies such as Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Cerf, 1990); Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992); Theodore Pulcini, *Exegesis as Polemical Discourse: Ibn Ḥazm on Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); and recently Devorah Schoenfeld, *Isaac on Jewish and Christian Altars: Polemic and Exegesis in Rashi and the Glossa Ordinaria* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
6. Fred M. Donner, “From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community,” *Al-Abhath* 50–51 (2002–3): 9–53; expanded in Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).
7. William A. Graham, *Islamic and Comparative Religious Studies: Selected Writings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 287.
8. For example, in some places (e.g., Q. 3:110), the People of the Book are those who have received a revelation but subsequently distorted or lost it, and in others (Q. 9:30–31), Jews and Christians are accused of polytheism itself. See Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 70–71.
9. Graham, *Islamic and Comparative*, 178; See also William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.
10. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering, eds., *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), v.
11. For a comparison of Jewish and Christian notions of the four levels of scripture, see Frank Talmage, “Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred Texts in Medieval Judaism,” in *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible to the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 313–55. Reprint in *Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver: Studies in Medieval Jewish Exegesis and Polemics*, ed. Barry D. Walfish (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 108–50. On “levels” of interpretation in the Qurʾān, see Herbert Berg, “Polysemy,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane D. McAuliffe, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001–6), 4:155–58; and Claude Gillot, “Exegesis of the Qurʾān; Classical and Medieval,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 2:99–124. On medieval Christian notions of the levels of exegetical interpretation, see the classic overview by Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis. Vol. 1: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 1. Similarly, the individual introductory essays: Barry D. Walfish, “An Introduction to Medieval Jewish Biblical Interpretation,” in *With Reverence for the Word*, ed. McAuliffe et al, 3–12; Joseph W. Goering, “An Introduction to Medieval Christian Biblical Interpretation,” in *With Reverence for the Word*, ed. McAuliffe et al, 197–203; and Jane Dammen McAuliffe, “An Introduction to Medieval Interpretation of the Qurʾān,” in *With Reverence for the Word*, ed. McAuliffe et al, 311–19.
12. Aaron Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2, 142. See also Guy Stroumsa, “From Abraham’s Religion to the Abrahamic Religions,” *Historia Religionum* 3 (2011): 11–22.

13. For an overview of these terms, see Kurt Aland, “Apologetik,” in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel, 13 vols. (Basel: Schwabe, 1971–2007), 1:446–47; and Dirk Kemper and Hans Saner, “Polemik,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 7:1029–31. The word *polemicus* and related terms with the meaning of ‘polemical disputations’ do not appear, to my knowledge, in medieval dictionaries or word lists, with the exception of a single reference in R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List From British and Irish Sources* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 357, which lists *polemicus* as “controversialist, c. 1363” but gives no further source.
14. For an overview of the genre and forms of medieval anti-Jewish writing, see the summary by Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, 361–422.
15. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 2011), 390 and 363, respectively.
16. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, “Analytical Survey 5: ‘Reading Is Good Prayer’: Recent Research on Female Reading Communities,” *New Medieval Literatures* 5, ed. Rita Copeland, David Lawton, and Wendy Scase (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 229–97 at 231. For another useful criticism of the notion of community, see also Miri Rubin, “Small Groups: Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages,” in *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Jennifer Kermode (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1991), 132–49, here 133–35.
17. Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 90.
18. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6. As Miri Rubin argues, alluding to the partially imaginary idealizing inherent in any definition of community, “Community operates as a measure of well-being, of proximity and distance from an ideal state of social relations.” See Rubin, “Small Groups,” 132.
19. Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 2. At the same time, the studies here take a different tack than that developed by Barbara Rosenwein in connection with “emotional communities,” which she describes as “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and who value—or devalue—the same or related emotions.” See Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.
20. Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 131; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 215.
21. Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 36.
22. See for example Alexander Andrée, “Magisterial Auctoritas and Biblical Scholarship at the School of Laon in the Twelfth Century,” in *Auctor et Auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi Litteris. Author and Authorship in Medieval Latin Literature, Proceedings of the VIIth Congress of the International Medieval Latin Committee (Benevento-Naples,*

- November 9–13, 2010), ed. Edoardo D'Angelo and Jan Ziolkowski (Florence: Sismel, 2014), 3–16.
23. This was the approach taken by the convert to Islam Anselm Turmeda/ʿAbd Allāh al-Tarjumān (d. 1423), on whom see Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 200–212.
 24. Ramon Martí, *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, trans. Adolfo Robles Sierra, 2 vols. (Würtzburg: Echter and Altenberge: Telos, 1990–93), 1:54; Ramon Martí, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Iudaeos* (Leipzig: Heirs of Friedrich Lankisch, at the press of Johann Wittigav's Widow, 1687; reprint, Farnborough: Gregg, 1967), 2, 510, 750, 808, 859.
 25. See Yitzhak Baer, “Le-Biqoret ha-vikkuḥim shel R. Yeḥiel mi-Paris ve-R. Moshe ben Naḥman,” *Tarbiṣ* 2 (1931), 172–87 at 187. See Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*, 121–34. On the consideration of *Auctoritas* in other polemical texts, see Cándida Ferrero Hernández, “El *Liber de Doctrina Machumeti* como *auctoritas* en el *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis*,” in *Auctor et Auctoritas*, 353–368; and Núria Gómez Llauger, “Auctor et auctoritas en el tratado *Zelus Christi contra iudaeos, sarracenos et infideles* de Pedro de la Cavalleria,” in *Auctor et Auctoritas*, 423–434.
 26. On *iʿjāz*, see Richard C. Martin, “Inimitability,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 2:526–36. On its development within the terms of Arabic literary criticism, see G.J.H. Van Gelder, *Beyond the Line: Classical Arabic Literary Critics on the Coherence and Unity of the Poem* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 97–100.
 27. For a consideration of Martí's approach to citation and translation, see Ryan Szpiech, “Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P.,” in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Fresco and Charles Wright (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 171–87.
 28. Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 2, discussed in Kruger's contribution to this volume. For a related discussion of the intersection of gender and medieval disputational writing, see Steven Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 3–27; the recent essay by Michael L. Satlaw, “From Salve to Weapon: Torah Study, Masculinity, and the Babylonian Talmud,” in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 16–27; and the overview by Ryan Szpiech, “Introduction. Critical Cluster: Between Gender and Genre in Later-Medieval Sepharad: Love, Sex, and Polemics in Hebrew Writing from Christian Iberia,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3, no. 2 (2011): 119–29.
 29. Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells, “Introduction. Penelope D. Johnson, the Bowsell Thesis, and Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe,” in *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe. Gender, Power, Patronage, and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom*, ed. Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 1–13 at 13.

1. *The Father of Many Nations: Abraham in al-Andalus*

Sarah Stroumsa

1. On the development of the concept, see Guy G. Stroumsa, "From Abraham's Religion to the Abrahamic Religions," *Historia Religionum* 3 (2011): 11–22, especially 19–20.
2. The territory of al-Andalus changes with the vagaries of the wars between Christians and Muslims, from the control of almost the whole of the Iberian Peninsula (covering an area encompassing most of modern Spain as well as modern Portugal) to the small Kingdom of Granada in the fifteenth century.
3. Thomas E. Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 2. See, further, Sarah Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 6.
4. On the role of Jews in the development of philosophy, see Sarah Stroumsa, "Thinkers of 'This Peninsula': An Integrative Approach to the Study of Philosophy in al-Andalus," in *Beyond Religious Borders: Interaction and Intellectual Exchange in the Medieval Islamic World*, ed. David Freidenreich and Miriam Goldstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 44–53, 176–81. For a slightly modified version of this paper, see Sarah Stroumsa, *Al-Andalus und Sefarad: von Bibliotheken und Gelehrten im muslimischen Spanien*, Arye Maimon Vortrag an der Universität Trier, 5. Oktober 2009 (Trier: Kliimedia, 2010).
5. A. J. Arberry, *The Chester Beatty Library: A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1955–66), 1:68–9.
6. See Ibn Masarra, *Min qaḍāyā al-fikr al-islāmī*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Jaʿfar (Cairo: Dār al-ʿilm, 1978); Ibn Masarra, *Min al-turāth al-falsafī li-Ibn Masarra*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl Ibrāhīm Jaʿfar (Cairo: Dār al-ʿilm, 1982). See also Pilar Garrido Clemente, "Edición crítica del K. *Jawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf* de Ibn Masarra," in *Al-Andalus-Magreb* 14 (2007): 51–89; Pilar Garrido Clemente, "Traducción anotada de la *Risālat al-Ittibār* de Ibn Masarra de Córdoba," in *Estudios humanísticos. Filología* 30 (2008): 139–63. According to Jaʿfar, *Risālat al-Ittibār* is probably identical with the work that some sources mention by the title of *Kitāb al-taḥsira*; see Ibn Masarra, *Min qaḍāyā al-fikr al-islāmī*, ed. Jaʿfar, 300–306. On the titles of Ibn Masarra's works according to Andalusī sources, see also Miguel Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra*, trans. E.H. Douglas and H.W. Yoder (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 41n23.
7. See Emilio Tornero, "Noticia sobre la publicación de obras inéditas de Ibn Masarra," *Al-Qanṭara* 14 (1993): 47–64; Sarah Stroumsa and Sara Sviri, "The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra and his *Epistle on Contemplation*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 201–53.
8. See Godefroid de Callatāy, "Philosophy and Bāṭinism in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra's *Risālat al-Ittibār* and the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 41 forthcoming. Central to de Callatāy's argument is his dating of the compilation of the *Rasāʾil* and of their introduction to al-Andalus. As he convincingly argues, "from the first half of the 10th century, the *Epistles* of the Brethren not only existed in Iraq, its place of origin, but also successfully circulated through al-Andalus"; see de Callatāy, "Philosophy and Bāṭinism in al-Andalus," note 7; Godefroid de Callatāy, "Magia en al-Andalus: *Rasāʾil Ijwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* y *Gāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Picatrix),"

Al-Qanṭara 34, no. 2 (2013): 297–344. I am indebted to Godefroid de Callatay for generously making these articles available to me before publication.

9. See Stroumsa and Sviri, “The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy in al-Andalus.”
10. See Alexander Altmann, “The Ladder of Ascension,” in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on his Seventieth Birthday by His Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, ed. E. E. Urbach, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Chaim Wirszubski (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 1–32; reprinted in Alexander Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), 41–72; and see de Callatay, “Philosophy and Bāṭinism in al-Andalus.”
11. For early antecedents of this Qur’ānic passage in Jewish and Christian sources, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1954–61), 1:189, 212–13, 303–6, and 5:210, 217–18, 229–30; David Sidersky, *Les origines des légendes musulmanes dans le Coran et dans les vies des prophètes* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1933), 35–6; see also Stroumsa and Sviri, “The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy,” 234–35.
12. See Stroumsa and Sviri, “The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy,” 241–42. *Dalāla* (proof), here like *dalīl* (a sign pointing in the right direction), is a central concept in Ibn Masarra’s epistemology, where the proof consists of either a natural or a scriptural element, the nature of which indicates its source; see Stroumsa and Sviri, “The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy,” 231. For Abraham and Qur’an 6:75, see also *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir—Dār Bayrūt, 1377/1957), 1:159. Ibn Masarra’s fascination with Abraham is attested also by Ibn al-‘Arabī, who mentions that Ibn Masarra associated Abraham with the archangel Mikhā’il in that they both oversee livelihood (*arżāq*); see Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Fuṣuṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. ‘A. I. al-Kayyālī and al-Ḥusaynī al-Shādhilī al-Darkāwī (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 2003), 69; see Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makiyya*, ed. ‘Uthmān Yaḥyā and Ibrāhīm Madkūr (Cairo: 1972), 348 (#545).
13. On the midrashic Abraham and his relation to the Qur’ān, see Rudi Paret, “Ibrāhīm,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition (Leiden and London: Brill and Luzac, 1986), 3:980–81; Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Norman Calder, “From Midrash to Scripture: The Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition,” *Le Muséon* 101 (1988): 375–402; Shari L. Lowin, “Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegesis,” *Religion Compass* 5/6 (2011): 224–35, at <http://online.library.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2011.00274.x/pdf>.
14. On the Jewish community of Kairawan, see M. Ben-Sasson, *Ẓemiḥat ha-Qehillah ha-Yehudit be-Arṣot ha-Islam: Qayrawan 800–1057* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996).
15. See Sarah Stroumsa, “Ibn Masarra and the Beginnings of Mystical Thought in al-Andalus,” in *Mystical Approaches to God*, ed. Peter Schäfer (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2006), 92–112.
16. See Georges Vajda, *Le Commentaire sur le Livre de la Création de Dūnaš ben Tāmīm de Kairouan (Xe siècle)*, Nouvelle édition, revue et augmenté par Paul B. Fenton (Paris: Peeters, 2002), 39 and 214.
17. *Sefer Yeẓira* VIII:5, in Sa’adiah Gaon’s version: “*u-khshevin Avraham Avinu ve-zar ve-zeraf ve-ḥaqar ve-ḥashav ve-‘alah be-yado, niglah ‘alav ha-qaddosh barukh hu’, ve-qara’ ‘alav ha-miqra’ ha-zeh: ‘be-terem ezorkha ba-beṭen yeda’tikha u-ve-terem teze’*”

mi-beṭen hiqdashtikha, navi' la-goyyim netatikha' Ve-'asa'o ohavo, ve-karat lo berit u-le-zar'o 'ad 'olam." Earlier versions give a slightly different text, and the verse from Jeremiah 1:5 is not quoted in them. See Ithamar Gruenwald, "A Preliminary Critical Edition of *Sefer Yezira*," *Israel Oriental Studies* 1 (1971): 132–77.

18. On Abraham in *Sefer Yezira*, see Yehuda Liebes, *Torat ha-yezirah shel Sefer Yezira* (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 2000), especially 73–110.
19. Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Abbār, *al-Takmila li-Kitāb al-ṣila*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām al-Harās (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), 297 (no. 1011); Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib min ghuṣn al-andalus al-raṭīb*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 2:150–51; and see Maribel Fierro, "Plants, Mary the Copt, Abraham, Donkeys and Knowledge: Again on Bāṭinism during the Umayyad Caliphate in al-Andalus," in *Differenz und Dynamik im Islam. Festschrift für Heinz Halm zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Verena Klemm (Wurtzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2012), 125–44 at 134.
20. See Eric John, "An Alchemical Tract Ascribed to Mary the Copt," *Archeion* 1 (1927): 161–7; Fierro, "Plants," 132. On the other hand, there is no indication, either in Ibn Masarra's writings or in the biographical material about him, that as a *muwallad*, he gave special significance to Māriya's non-Arab ancestry; cf. Fierro, "Plants," 132.
21. See Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, ed. L. Gauthier (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936); Lenn Evan Goodman, *Ibn Ṭufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzān: A Philosophical Tale* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Godefroid de Callataÿ, "Did the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* Inspire Ibn Ṭufayl for his *Yaqdhān*?" *Ishraq* 4 (2013): 82–9.
22. See Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl wa-taqrīr mā bayna al-sharī'a wa-l-ḥikma min al-itṭisāl*, in Charles E. Butterworth, ed. and trans., *Averroës, Decisive Treatise & Epistle Dedicatory* (Provo, Ut.: Brigham Young University Press, 2001).
23. See Ibn Rushd, *Tafsīr mā ba'd at-ṭabī'a*—"Grand commentaire" de la *métaphysique*, ed. M. Bouyges (Beirut: Dār al-Machreq, 1973), vol. 3:1634.
24. Maimonides's conscious association of the child's name with the patriarch's is attested in *Iggerot ha-Rambam*, ed. D. H. Baneth (Jerusalem: Meqizei Nirdamim, 1946), 96.
25. On Maimonides's theory of the history of religion, and on the place of the Sabians therein, see Sarah Stroumsa, "Sabéens de Harran et Sabéens de Maïmonide," in *Maimonide: philosophe et savant (1138–1204)*, ed. T. Lévy and R. Rashed (Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 335–52; Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World*, 85–111.
26. See *The Guide of the Perplexed* 3.29 in Moses ben Maimon, *Dalālat al-hā'irīn*, ed. S. Munk and I. Yoel (Jerusalem, Y. Yunoviz, 1931), 378; *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*, translated by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 518. On *The Nabatean Agriculture*, see Ibn Waḥshiyya, *Al-Filāḥa al-nabaṭiyya (L'agriculture nabatéenne)*, ed. T. Fahd (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1993); Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *The Last Pagans of Iraq. Ibn Waḥshiyya and His Nabatean Agriculture* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). On its presence and influence in al-Andalus, see Sarah Stroumsa, "Entre Harran et al-Maghreb: la théorie maïmonidienne de l'histoire des religions et ses sources arabes," in *Judíos y musulmanes en al-Andalus y el Magreb—Contactos intelectuales*, ed. M. Fierro (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2002), 153–64;

- Julio Samsó, *Las ciencias de los antiguos en al-Andalus* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992), 287–88; Fierro, “Plants,” 136.
27. “*Wa-ākhir tilka al-qīṣṣa dhakarū anna al-malik sajana Avraham Avinu . . . wa-annahū dāma fī muhājatihim ayyāman, wa-huwa fī al-sijn. Thumma khāfa al-malik annahu yufsidā ‘alayhi siyāsatahu wa-yarudda al-nās ‘an adyānihim, fa-nā-hu li-ṭaraf al-Shām, ba‘da isti‘ṣāl kulla mā la-hu. Hākadhā ḥakū.*
Wa-tajidu hādhihi al-qīṣṣa mashrūḥa hākadhā fī al-filāḥa al-nabaṭiyya. Wa-lam yadhkurū mā jā‘at bi-hi āthārūnā al-ṣādiqa, wa-lā mā atā-hu min al-wahy, li-annahum mukadhdhibūn la-hu, li-mukhālafatihi li-ra’yihim al-fāsid”; *Guide* 3.29 (*Dalālat*, 375; Pines, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, 515).
28. On the Gnostic “reversal” of biblical historiography, see Guy G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), especially 170. Because of such deviations from (and sometimes reversal of) the scriptural narrative, a Muslim thinker like Ibn Masarra could not simply tap into the so-called Harrānian-Sabian literature in his portrayal of Patriarch Abraham, notwithstanding the otherwise significant impact that this literature probably had on him. Cf. Fierro, “Plants,” 135–36.
29. “*Hitkhill le-shoṭeṭ be-da‘to . . . ve-libbo meshoṭeṭ u-mevin.*” See Moshe ben Maimon, *Mishneh Torah*, 6 vols. (Jerusalem: Levin-Epstein, 1965), 1:56 (*Sefer ha-mada‘, Hilkhot Avodat Kohavim* 1:3).
30. See *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot avodat kohavim*, 1:3. On Maimonides’s use of Gen. 21:35, see Maimonides, *Moreh ha-nevukhim*, Hebrew trans. Michael Schwarz, 2 vols. (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 2002), 1:3n1; Joel Kraemer and Josef Stern, “Shlomo Pines on the Translation of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*,” *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8 (1998): 13–24, at 18–19n15. On Abraham as the first monotheist, see also Aviezer Ravitzky, “Hagut u-manhigut be-mishnat ha-Rambam,” *Da‘at* 57–59 (2006): 31–59.
31. Moshe Halbertal, *Ha-Rambam. Rabi Moshe ben Maimon* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2009), 88.
32. Moses ben Maimon, *Mishnah ‘im Perush Rabbenu Mosheh ben Maimon*, ed. J. Kapah, 6 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1965), 1:417.
33. Moses ben Maimon, *Teshuvot ha-Rambam*, ed. J. Blau, 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1957–86), 2:728. The pun on the Hebrew words *ksil* and *maskil* was already used by the founder of Karaism, Daniel al-Qūmisī (d. 946) to express his disillusionment with his sectarian predecessor Anan ben David. According to the tenth-century al-Qirqisānī, al-Qūmisī first held Anan in high esteem, calling him “head of the wise ones (*maskilim*),” but he then changed the appellation to “head of the fools (*ksilim*);” see Abū Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-Anwār wa-l-marāqib. Code of Karaite Law*, ed. L. Nemoy, 5 vols. (New York: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1939–43), 1:4–5; Bruno Chiesa and Wilfrid Lockwood, *Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisānī on Jewish Sects and Christianity* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984), 94–95. In the Karaite context, the pun was particularly apt, *maskilim* being a favorite self-designation of the karaites, who regarded themselves as the intended protagonists of the verse in Daniel 12:3 (“and those who are wise [*maskilim*] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament”). In Maimonides’s case the pun was triggered by the use of the denigration *ksil* by Obadya’s teacher. Although it is likely that Maimonides was familiar with al-Qirqisānī’s

work, there is no way of knowing whether, when looking for a stinging response to a benighted rabbi, he consciously borrowed from al-Qūmisī's dismissive treatment of Anan as recorded by al-Qirqisānī.

34. It is interesting to see such intertextuality contributing to the construction of the figure of Abraham in the commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra (d. 1164), whose preoccupation with the nature of idolatry had probably influenced Maimonides. Commenting on Exodus 6:2–3, Ibn Ezra discusses the various divine names that appear in these verses. According to Ibn Ezra, since the intended audience of these verses included the idolatrous Egyptians, the text used the name “God” (*Elohim*), the belief in whom is common to all humanity. He continues to explain that, whereas the Tetragrammaton was revealed only to Moses, the patriarchs came to know God as *Shaddai*, a name that expresses His omnipotence as the ruler of the universe, and thus also corresponds to the universal human experience. Ibn Ezra's commentary here reflects his understanding of the role of the patriarchs, first and foremost among whom is of course Abraham: to instruct the whole of humanity.

Ibn Ezra's commentary, written in Hebrew, was probably composed after he had left the Iberian Peninsula. But the ideas he expresses are quintessentially Andalusī. This is particularly evident in his commentary here, where, quoting the Jewish Andalusī poet and statesman Samuel ha-Nagid (d. 1055), he draws an equivalent between the divine name *Shaddai* and the Arabic word *shadīd*, ‘strong’, as well as with the (Qur'ānic) divine epithet *al-Qahhār*, ‘the victorious and mighty’. On Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, see also Isadore Twersky, “Did R. Abraham Ibn Ezra Influence Maimonides?” in *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth-Century Jewish Polymath*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Jay M. Harris (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 21–48.

2. *Ibn al-Maḥrūmah's Notes on Ibn Kammūnah's Examination of the Three Religions: The Issue of the Abrogation of Mosaic Law*
Sidney Griffith

1. See Ibn Kammūna, Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna's *Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth-Century Essay in Comparative Religion*, ed. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Ibn Kammūna, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths: A Thirteenth-Century Essay in the Comparative Study of Religion, Translated from the Arabic, with an Introduction and Notes*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
2. Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad: 'Izz al-Dawla ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) and His Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Sabine Schmidtke, “Ibn Kammūna, Sa'd,” in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1:504–8.
3. See Samaw'al al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd; Silencing the Jews*, ed. and trans. Moshe Perlmann, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 22 (1964); Samaw'al al-Maghribī *Samaw'al al-Maghribī's (d. 570–1175) Ifḥām al-Yahūd: The Early Recension*, ed. Ibrahim Marazka, Reza Pourjavady, and Sabine Schmidtke (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006). See also Sabine Schmidtke, “Samaw'al al-Maghribī, al-,” *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, 4:238–40.

4. See Judah Halevi, *Kitāb al-radd wa-l-dalīl fī dīn al-dhalīl (al-kitāb al-Kuzari)*, ed. David Baneth and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1977); Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith*, trans. N.D. Korobkin, 2nd rev. ed. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).
5. For the full bibliographical details on the text, see Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad*, 106–14.
6. See the summary in Ḥabīb Bacha, *Ḥawāshī (Notes) d'Ibn al-Maḥrūma sur le Tanqīh d'ibn Kammūna*, Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien, 6 (Jouniah, Liban and Roma: Librairie Saint-Paul and Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1984), xxxviii–xlvi. See also Ignatius Aphram I. Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, trans. and ed., Matti Moosa, 2nd rev. ed. (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2003), 485.
7. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, I. See Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS 15. For the Chicago manuscript, see Chicago, Oriental Institute, MS 11997.
8. See Moshe Perlmann, “Ibn al-Maḥrūma: A Christian Opponent of Ibn Kammūna,” in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume: On the Occasion of his Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Saul Liebermann, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965), 2:641–65.
9. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*. See the review by Leon Nemoj in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 77 (1986): 82–3.
10. See Barbara Roggema, “Jewish-Christian Debate in a Muslim Context: Ibn al-Maḥrūma’s Notes on Ibn Kammūna’s *Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths*,” in *All Those Nations . . . Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East: Studies Presented to Han Drijvers at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday by Colleagues and Students*, ed. Herman J. L. Vanstiphout et al. (Groningen: Styx Publications, 1999), 131–39.
11. See Simone Rosenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung unter islamischer Herrschaft: 7.–10. Jahrhundert*, *Judaica et Christiana*, 21 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2004).
12. See the passage quoted in J.M. Fiey, *Chrétien Syriaques sous les Mongols: (Il-Khanat de Perse, XIIIe-XIVe s.)*, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 362 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1975), 23. See also David Bundy, “The Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses to the Islamification of the Mongols,” in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 33–53.
13. See Fiey, *Chrétien syriaques*, 84.
14. See Pourjavady and Schmidtke, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad*, 112–13.
15. See Fiey, *Chrétien syriaques*, 80–84.
16. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 78.
17. See in this connection the important article on an earlier Jacobite’s view of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law by Shlomo Pines, “La loi naturelle et la société: La doctrine politico-théologique d’Ibn Zur’a, philosophe chrétien de Bagdad,” in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Uriel Heyd, *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, vol. 9 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 154–90.
18. A classic in the genre is the work by ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamdhānī, *Tathbīt dalā’il al-nubūwah*. See the discussion in Gabriel Said Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu: ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Critique of Christian Origins* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

19. See Barbara Roggema, “Epistemology as Polemics: Ibn Kammūna’s Examination of the Apologetics of the Three Faiths,” in *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. B. Roggema, M. Poorthuis, and P. Valkenberg, Publications of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, NS, vol. 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 47–70.
20. On the *Iḥām al-Yahūd*, see note 3 above.
21. See Schmidtke, “Samaw’al al-Maghribī.”
22. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 101 (#14).
23. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 125 (#20).
24. Ibn Kammūnah had devoted a considerable portion of his chapter on Judaism (Chapter 2) in the *Tanqīh* to replies to the objections of Samaw’al al-Maghribī’s *Iḥām al-yahūd*.
25. See, e.g., Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 138 (#37) and 213 (#118).
26. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 175 (#70).
27. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 154 (#51).
28. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 130–31 (#27).
29. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 90 (#8).
30. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 228 (#133).
31. See Perlmann, “Ibn al-Maḥrūma,” 645; Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, lxi–lxxv.
32. Ibn Kammūna, *Ibn Kammūna’s Examination*, 44.
33. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 95–96 (#11).
34. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 97 (#13).
35. Ibn Kammūna, *Ibn Kammūna’s Examination*, 46.
36. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 101 (#14).
37. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 103 (#15).
38. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 122 (#17).
39. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 123 (#18).
40. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 128 (#23).
41. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 128 (#23).
42. See Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 134 (#32).
43. See Sidney H. Griffith, “Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth Century,” *Jewish History* 3 (1988): 65–94. See also A.P. Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 338 and 339 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1973).
44. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 196 (#91).
45. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 203 (#101).
46. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 197 (#93). See L.B. Miller, “Al-Samarqandī, Shams al-Dīn,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 12 vols. with indexes and etc. (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), 8:1038, where both al-Samarqandī’s book and the *sharḥ* he wrote on it are mentioned. Note that al-Samarqandī (d. 1303) lived just two generations prior to Ibn al-Maḥrūmah (d. 1354).
47. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 200 (#100).
48. See Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 207 (#109).
49. See Ibn Kammūna, *Sa’d B. Maṣūr ibn Kammūna’s Examination*, 51–54; Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 189–94.
50. See Ibn Kammūna, *Sa’d B. Maṣūr ibn Kammūna’s Examination*, 54; Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 194.

51. See Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 194 (#88).
52. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 205 (#105).
53. Ibn Kammūna, *Saʿd b. Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna's Examination*, 54. The translation is adapted from Ibn Kammūna, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths*, 83. In this passage Ibn Kammūnah reveals that he is aware that in Christian texts the *ṣifah*, 'living' (Ar. *ḥayy*), is taken to be an essential attribute of God that bespeaks His "life" (*ḥayātuhu*), and can therefore be said to be one of the three *aqānīm* (hypostases) of the one God. See Rachid Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750–1050)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985).
54. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 195 (# 91). In the earlier passage, Ibn Kammūnah was commenting on the Christian creed he had gotten from the Jacobites and, after citing some differences in wording but not in meaning that he had noticed in the text in comparison with the creed as the Nestorians had it, he said that the two communities "agreed that the hypostasis of the Father is the essence, and the hypostasis of the Son is the Word, and it is 'knowledge' (*al-ʿilm*), and that it is eternally begotten of the Father, not by way of physical generation, but like the light from the sun; and the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit is 'life' (*al-ḥayāh*), and that it is eternally emanating from the Father." Ibn Kammūna, *Saʿd b. Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna's Examination*, 52. It is interesting to note that in a later comment, in the section on the union of divinity and humanity in the Messiah, Ibn al-Maḥrūmah himself uses language very similar to that of Ibn Kammūnah, while introducing what he regards as essential distinctions. He says, "It is evident from Christian discourse that by the Father they mean the essence, and by the Son, the Word (*al-kalimah*), the speech (*al-nuṭq*), and the knowledge (*al-ʿilm*), according to the differentiation of the expressions. Would the transformation of the essence into an attribute be possible, or of an attribute into an essence?" Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 199 (#97).
55. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 196 (#92).
56. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 197 (#93).
57. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 198 (#95).
58. See Samir Kh. Samir, ed., *Le traité de l'unité de Yahyā ibn ʿAdī (893–974)*, Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien, 2 (Jounieh: Librairie Saint Paul; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1980).
59. See Ibn Kammūna, *Saʿd ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna's Examination*, 56–57.
60. See Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 202–3 (#101).
61. See Ibn Kammūna, *Saʿd ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Kammūna's Examination*.
62. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 216 (#123), in reference to Daniel 9:24.
63. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 216 (#123b).
64. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 217 (#123d). Ibn al-Maḥrūmah seems to be referring to Daniel 9:26, "And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."
65. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 217 (#123d).
66. Bacha, *Ḥawāshī*, 220 (#125).
67. See John Burton, "*Naskh* (a.), or *al-Nāsikh wa ʿl-Mansūkh*," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 7:1009–12; John Burton, "Abrogation," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane D. McAuliffe, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001–6), 1:11–19.
68. See Camilla Adang and Sabine Schmidtke, "Polemics (Muslim-Jewish)," in Stillman, *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, 4:82–90.

69. See Binyamin Abrahamov, “Some Notes on the Notion of *Naskh* in the *Kalām*,” in *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission, and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, ed. Anna Akasoy and Wim Raven (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 3–19.
70. Sa’adiyah in his *Kitāb al-amānāt wa-l-i’tiqādāt* and al-Qirqisānī in his *Kitāb al-Anwār*.
71. Norman Calder, “*Shari’a*,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 9:321–8.
72. Calder, “*Shari’a*,” 322.
73. See Burton, “Abrogation.”

3. *Al-Biqā’ī Seen through Reuchlin: Reflections on the Islamic Relationship with the Bible*

Walid Saleh

1. On al-Biqā’ī and his text, see Walid Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqā’ī’s Bible Treatise* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Walid Saleh, “A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqā’ī’s Bible Treatise and His Defense of Using the Bible to Interpret the Qur’ān,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 629–54; Walid Saleh, “‘Sublime in Its Style, Exquisite in Its Tenderness’: The Hebrew Bible Quotations in al-Biqā’ī’s Qur’ān Commentary,” in *Adaptations and Innovations: Studies on the Interaction Between Jewish and Islamic Thought and Literature from the Early Middle Ages to the Late Twentieth Century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer*, ed. Y. Tzvi Langermann and Josef Stern (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 331–47; and Walid Saleh and Kevin Casey, “An Islamic Diatessaron: al-Biqā’ī’s Harmony of the Four Gospels,” in *Translating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-Critical and Literary Aspects*, ed. Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2012), 85–115.
2. See David Price, *Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
3. Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), xix.
4. On the prohibition of non-Muslims studying the Qur’ān, see Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).
5. For a fuller discussion of the legal opinions, see Saleh, “A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist.”
6. For this quote, see Price, *Johannes Reuchlin*, 8, 65.
7. I offer a full presentation of this project in my introduction to the edition of the text, *In Defense of the Bible*, 21–35.
8. For an introduction to Muslim discussion with biblical prophets, see Robert Tottoli, *I profeti biblici nella tradizione islamica* (Brescia: Paideia, 1999); and Brannon M. Wheeler, *Prophets in the Qur’ān. An Introduction to the Qur’ān and Muslim Exegesis* (London: Continuum, 2002).
9. On such Muslim engagement with the Bible, see Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*; and Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).
10. For an overview of language study in Islamic tradition, see Kees Versteegh, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought III: The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1997).

4. *Two Dominicans, a Lost Manuscript, and Medieval Christian**Thought on Islam*

Thomas E. Burman

1. Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani quem Marcvs canonicvs Toletanvs transtvlit,” ed. Nadia Petrus Pons (PhD Diss., Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2008). I am grateful to the Medieval Frontiers faculty research seminar at the University of Tennessee, which read this essay in an earlier draft, as did Rita George-Tvrtkovic. Their comments were most helpful—indeed, the final product would have been much improved if I had been able to incorporate even more of their suggestions.
2. *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis aut patefaciens*, ed. and trans. Thomas E. Burman in *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 215–385.
3. On this manuscript, see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 217–23; and Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins*, vol. 5 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1966), 339–41.
4. My thinking here has been partly shaped by conversations with my insightful PhD student, Leah Giamalva.
5. Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Marc de Toledé,” in *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la reconquista de Toledo: Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes (Toledo, 20–26 Mayo 1985)*, ed. R. González-Ruiz, 4 vols. (Toledo: Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozárabes de San Eugenio, 1987–90, 1992), 3:25–59 at 48.
6. Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani,” 371.
7. See, for example, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 21 vols. in 11 (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1993), 18:146–47.
8. Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur’ān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 56–59.
9. *Liber denudationis* 9.8, 19, 20.
10. When I quote the Qur’ān in English in the text here and elsewhere, I follow Tarif Khalidi’s excellent recent translation, *The Qur’an: A New Translation* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2008).
11. “Retulit autem mihi pater meus, qui dixit: retulit mihi Ahmed Elhasen filius Rasik, qui dixit . . . audiui Machometum dicentem, ‘diuidetur populus meus post me in septuaginta tres diuisiones, quarum una diuisio salua erit; residuum igni deputabitur’ (*Liber denudationis* 2.2, and see further Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 143–53).
12. “narratio nullus uestrum dubitat” (the odd Latin syntax here is a calque of a standard Arabic construction), “expositio . . . binus sententiae” (*Liber denudationis* 10.17, 7.2; and see Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 145–48).
13. *Liber denudationis* 3.3–4; and *Religious Polemic*, 47–48, 57–59.
14. *Liber denudationis* 9.11–16; Ramon Martí, *De secta Machometi*, ed. Josep Hernando i Delgado in his “Ramón Martí (s. XIII), *De seta Machometi o De origine, progressu et fine Machometi et quadruplici reprobatione prophetiae eius*,” *Acta historica et archaeologica medievalia* 4 (1983): 9–63 at 40.
15. “Deus est lumen celorum et terre, et similitudo luminis eius sicut lampas olei incensa lumine.” Ramon Martí, *Explanatio simboli apostolorum*, ed. Joseph M. March in his “En Ramón Martí y la seva ‘Explanatio Symboli Apostolorum,’” *Anuari de l’Institut*

- d'Estudis Catalans* (1908): 443–96, at 462, ll. 41–42. “Deus nempe est lumen celorum et terre. Et similitudo luminis eius est ut lucinium in quo est in candela” (Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani,” 224).
16. “Dixit ipsa, Deus meus, quomodo erit mihi filius, & non tetigit me homo?” Ramon Martí, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Iudaeos* (Leipzig: Heirs of Friedrich Lankisch, at the press of Johann Wittigav’s Widow, 1687; Rpt. Farnborough: Gregg, 1967), 749. For the text and variants, see Ryan Szpiech, “Citas árabes en caracteres hebreos en el *Pugio Fidei* del dominico Ramón Martí: entre la autenticidad y la autoridad,” *Al-Qanṭara* 32, no. 1 (2011): 71–107 at 98. “Et ait: ‘Creator mi, quomodo erit mihi filius et non tetigit me uir?’” (Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani,” 44).
 17. “Dixit in *Alcorano*, in tractatu *Errohmen*, id est, *Misericordis* . . . dixit in *Alcorano*, in tractatu *Alquitel*, id est, *Pugne*” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 30). On how Martí’s evolving methods of citing Jewish and Muslim sources were central to his construction of himself as an authority on Jewish and Muslim texts, see Ryan Szpiech’s excellent “Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P. (d. after 1284),” in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Charles D. Wright and Karen Fresco (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 171–87.
 18. Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 46.
 19. The beginnings of *a’shār* in this manuscript do not always correlate exactly with the modern system of verse numbering.
 20. Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 46; see also 34.
 21. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn ‘Aṭīyah al-Andalusī, *Al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-‘azīz* on 54:1, ed. al-Raḥḥālī al-Fārūq et al., 15 vols. (Doha: Ṭubī‘a ‘alā na-faḡat al-Shaykh Khalifah ibn Ḥamad Āl Thānī, 1977–91), 14:139–41.
 22. “Et hunc sensum approbat et confirmat talis glosator *Alcorani* super predictum locum” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 40).
 23. “Wa-‘an ba‘ḍ al-nās: anna ma’nāhu ‘yanshiqu yawm al-qiyaamah” (Abū al-Qāsim Jār Allāh Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshaf ‘an ḥaḡā’iq ḡhawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-‘uyūn al-aḡāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl* on 54:1, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Shāhīn. 4 vols. [Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 1995] 4:420).
 24. “O fili avunculi mei, ego iam concupivi te propter genus tuum nobile et fidelitatem tuam et bonos mores tuos” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 20). “Yā ibn ‘amm, innī raghibtu fika li-qarābitika wasīṭatika [sic] fī qawmika wa-amānatika wa-ḡsun khulūqika” (Abū Muḥammad ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-nabawīyah al-ma’rūf bi-sīrat Ibn Hishām*, ed. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ‘Āli Samak, 4 vols. in 2 [Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2008], 1:126).
 25. “Quando gallus cantat, videt angelum; et quando asinus rudit videt diabolum” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 32). This occurs in a section of the work entitled “De mendatiis Machometi” (26) and is an abridging translation of “Idhā sami‘tum ṣiyāḡ al-dikah fa-as’alū Allāh min faḡlihi fa-annahā ra’at malakan, wa-idhā sami‘tum nahīq al-ḡamār fa-ta’awwadhū bi-Allāh min al-shayṭān fa-annahū ra’ā shayṭān” (Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḡīḡ*, [Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009], 594=book 59, bāb 15, #3303).
 26. “Item dicitur in libro qui vocatur *Bochari*, secundum quod refert eadem Axa, quod quidam interrogabat eum quomodo veniebat sibi inspiratio illa quam dicebat esse a Deo. Qui respondit dicens ‘Aliquando venit inspiratio michi sicut sonitus tintinabulorum; et iste est fortior modus michi; et recebat a me ille sonus quando iam retinueram quod

dicebat. Et aliquando veniebat michi angelus in forma hominis et loquebatur michi et retinebam quod dicebat” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 22). “Aḥyān ya’tinī mithl ṣalṣalah al-jaras wa-huwa ashadduhu ‘aliya fa-yufṣamu ‘annī wa-qad wa’aytu ‘anhu mā qāla, wa-aḥyān yatamatthalu lī al-malak rajulan fa-yukallimunī fa-a’ī mā yaqūl” (al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 5=book 1, bāb 2, #2).

27. See Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 30, 50.
28. “Item dicitur in libro qui vocatur *Bochari*, in tractatu *Fidei*, quod Machometus dixit: ‘Non fuit aliquis propheta cui non sit datum facere miracula propter quod homines credebant ei” (Martí, *De secta Machometi*, 38), and see Hernando’s note on this section.
29. “Mā min al-anbiyā’i nabī illā u’ṭī mā mithluhu amana ‘alayhi al-bashar” (al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 954=book 66, bāb 1, #4981).
30. Muslim ibn al-Ḥajāj al-Qushayrī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), 82=book 1, bāb 70, #152.
31. Burman, *Reading the Qur’ān*, 149–77.
32. BnF MS ar. 384, fol. 32v. On this manuscript, see François Déroche, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Deuxième partie, *Manuscrits musulmans*, vol. 1, 2, *Les manuscrits du coran du Maghreb à l’Insulinde* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1985), 53.
33. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, says on Qur’ān 4.1 that one theory about what “nafs” means is *rajal wāḥid*. Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān fī ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān*, 12 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1997), 3:565–66.
34. Mark’s translation: “Timeate creatorem uestrum, qui uos ex anima una creauit et ex ea coniuge eius creauit et ex utroque uiros plures ac mulieres seminauit” (Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani,” 57). Thomas E. Burman, “How an Italian Friar Read His Arabic Qur’ān,” *Dante Studies* 125 (2007): 89–105 at 97–98.
35. François Déroche and José Martínez Gázquez, “Lire et traduire le Coran au Moyen Âge. Les gloses latines du manuscrit arabe 384 de la BnF,” *Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres* 3, *Comptes rendus des séances de l’année 2010* (2010), 1023–42 at 1030.
36. See al-Ṭabarī on Q. 34:14 at 10.358–59.
37. “Fertur quod Salomon dum staret innixus baculo suo. subito tantus arripuit eum dolor. quod stando expirauit. nec tamen corruit in terra diuino miraculo. demones autem qui famulabantur ei credentes cum staret eum uiuere. non audebant quicquam ludere. et exiuit quidam uermis de terra corrositque baculum eius et fractus est. et corruit Salomon in terra” (Paris, BnF MS ar. 384, fol. 174r).
38. Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra legem saracenorum* 4, ed. J.-M. Mériçoux in his “L’Ouvrage d’un frère prêcheur florentin en Orient à la fin du XIIIe siècle: Le ‘Contra legem Sarracenorum’ de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce,” in *Memorie domenicane*, n.s., 17 (1986): 1–144 at 76, 79.
39. “Dicunt etiam saraceni quod Deus promisit Mahometo quod nullus intraret paradisum ante ipsum” (*Contra legem saracenorum* 9, ed. Mériçoux, 103n40; Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 109–10=book 1, bāb 85, #196–97). Mériçoux suggests that Riccoldo quotes another well-known ḥadīth independently as well (“You [Muḥammad speaking] will divide up after me into seventy-three divisions of which one will be saved and all the rest consigned to fire” [for the Latin, see note 11 above] independently (*Contra legem saracenorum* 5, ed. Mériçoux, 81n18), but he clearly borrowed this, as so often, directly from *Liber denudationis* 2.2, where the same tradition in identical translation appears.

40. “Ipse etiam Mahometus fecit *librum* ubi scripsit duodecim milia uerba stupenda et cum admirantes quererent utrum illa omnia essent uera respondit quod solum tria milia ueritatem habebant, alia uero omnia falsa erant” (*Contra legem saracenorum* 9, ed. Mérigoux, 108, editor’s italics).
41. “Inueniuntur preterea quedam absona que Saraceni pro certo asserunt et trahuntur de Alchorano per expositionem; habentur autem expressse in *libro Narrationum Mahometi*” (*Contra legem saracenorum* 9, ed. Mérigoux, 107, editor’s italics).
42. See *Contra legem saracenorum* 9, ed. Mérigoux, 107–08, see esp. note 84).
43. *Contra legem saracenorum* 8, ed. Mérigoux, 91–92; *Liber denudationis* 7.1–10.
44. *Contra legem saracenorum* 10, ed. Mérigoux, 110; *Liber denudationis* 4.3.
45. Mark of Toledo, “Liber Alchorani,” 48.
46. Arthur Jefferey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 95–96. Intriguingly, these are just the instances in which Mark uses the eccentric translation that we find here: 3:51, 65. See *ibid.*
47. *Contra legem saracenorum* 15, ed. Mérigoux, 133.
48. Mérigoux, “L’Ouvrage d’un frère prêcheur,” 29–30.
49. For another example of this method of foliation among the Dominicans, see Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān*, 91–96.
50. BnF MS ar. 384, fol. 52r (the modern and medieval foliations are slightly out of sync) ll. 4 ff. (*Wa-idh qāla Allah: yā ʿĪsā ibn Maryam, ānta qultu li-l-nās*).
51. One example: “91” is written next to Q. 4:171 (Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, MS *Conv. sopp.* C 8.1173, fol. 190v, and see *Contra legem saracenorum* 3:75) while the corresponding passage in the Arabic Qurʾān is on “xli” (medieval foliation) of BnF MS ar. 384, fol. 43r (modern foliation): “Yā ahl-al-kitāb, lā taghlū fi dīnikum.” Riccoldo had clearly written “41,” which can easily be confused in medieval script for “91.”
52. See Thomas E. Burman, “Riccoldo da Monte di Croce y las traducciones latinas del árabe realizadas en España” in *Estudios de latín medieval hispánico. Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Latín Medieval Hispánico, Barcelona, 7–10 de septiembre de 2009*, ed. José Martínez Gázquez et al. (Florence: Sismel, 2011), 601–8 at 605.
53. Burman, “How an Italian Friar,” 102.
54. Georgio Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1939), *passim*.
55. I am grateful to Walid Saleh for this insight.
56. Mérigoux, “L’Ouvrage d’un frère prêcheur,” 56–57. There is a critical edition: *Confutatio Alcorani (1300). Martin Luther, Verlegung des Alcoran (1542)*, ed. and trans. Johannes Ehmann (Altenberge: Echter Verlag; Würzburg: Oros Verlag, 1999).

5. *The Anti-Muslim Discourse of Alfonso Buenhombre*
Antoni Biosca i Bas

This paper has been prepared under the auspices of the Research Project *La construcción de la identidad europea occidental: textos, contextos y discursos de controversia frente al islam y el judaísmo*, FFI2011-29696-Co2-02 of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

1. In his own words: “quia ego Gallicus sum.” It appears in the preface of his *Legenda sancti Antoni*. We can associate *Gallicus* with *Gallaecius*, because in the same chapter *Gallicia* is assimilated to *Gallaecia* when he states the limit of the world: “*usque ad Sanctum Iacobum de Gallicia.*”
2. This text has been copied, edited, and translated so many times that it can be considered a medieval bestseller. See Ora Limor, “The Epistle of Rabbi Samuel of Morocco: A Best-Seller in the World of Polemics,” in *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 177–94.
3. In this sense we must understand his sentence “*libellum qui nuper ad manus meas deuenit.*”
4. Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Codex Ambrosianus, MS I 128 Inf. fols. 146r–151v.
5. This work has, to date, never been printed or translated into a modern language. In 1500 Johannes Elisius edited a *Libellus Arabicus in malos medicos*, and a translation into Latin, made by Elisius, of an alleged Arabic medical text that an ancient Arab doctor, called Bonihominis, had written some years before. It is, of course, a fraud. Elisius tried to justify his recreation of the original text by pretending that he had translated it from the Arabic.
6. The bull reads, “*persona . . . in sacra pagina erudita, et experta in praedicatione verbi Dei, linguam populi illarum partium intelligat, habeatque peritiam loquendi eadem.*” Vicente Beltrán de Heredia O. P., *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca. 1219–1549* (Salamanca: U. de Salamanca, 1969), 354–5
7. Conrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi sive Summorum Pontificum S. R. E. Cardinalium Ecclesiarum Antistitum Series, ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1431 perducta* (Padua: Monasterii, 1913), 326–27.
8. According to the prologue of the *Legenda*, Buenhombre also translated biographies of Onufrius and Macarius, but nothing more is known of the existence of these texts.
9. The *Legenda Sancti Antoni* was edited in 1942 in an excellent edition by François Halkin, but not with all the manuscripts we know of today. See François Halkin, “La légende de Saint Antoine traduite de l’arabe par Alphonse Bonhome O.P.,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 60 (1942): 143–212. We have since been fortunate to find a new manuscript unknown to Halkin: Paderborn, Erzbischöfliche Akademische Bibliothek, Ms. Hux. 11a, which can be dated to the fifteenth century. The *Disputatio Abutalib* was edited by Santiago García-Jalón de la Lama and Klaus Reinhardt, *La disputa de Abutalib* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2006). The *Epistola Samuelis* has been edited and translated many times, but still lacks a critical edition.
10. Samaw’al al-Maghribī, *Ifḥam al-Yahūd. Silencing the Jews*, ed. and trans. Moshe Perlmann (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1964).
11. For a detailed study of this question, see Antoni Biosca i Bas, “Las traducciones coránicas de Alfonso Buenhombre,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 18 (2008): 257–77.
12. Klaus Reinhardt, “Un musulmán y un judío prueban la verdad de la fe cristiana: la disputa entre Abutalib de Ceuta y Samuel de Toledo,” in *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaísmo e islamismo durante la Edad Media en la Península Ibérica. Actes du Colloque international de San Lorenzo de El Escorial 23–26 juin 1991*, ed. Horacio Santiago-Otero (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), 191–212.

13. For a study of Qurʾānic quotations of Buenhombre, see Antoni Biosca i Bas, “Las traducciones.” An excellent work on readers of the Qurʾān in medieval Latin is Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
14. For these Qurʾānic quotations in the *Pugio fidei*, see Ryan Szpiech, “Citas árabes en caracteres hebreos en el *Pugio Fidei* del dominico Ramón Martí: entre la autenticidad y la autoridad,” *Al-Qanṭara* 32, no. 1 (2011): 71–107.
15. For the text of Martí, we have followed the edition of Leipzig 1687. The text of Lyra’s *Tractatulus contra quendam Iudaeum* appears after his *Postillae* in the sixth volume of the Douai / Antwerp 1617 edition. See *Biblia Sacra cum glossa ordinaria*, 6 vols. (Douai [vol. 1]: B. Bellerus; Antwerp [vols. 2–6]: J. van Keerbergen, 1617). We give the page number from this edition.
16. “O Maria, Deus elegit te, et decorauit te gratia, et ornaui et preelegit super omnes mulieres omnium filiorum matres.” We follow the numbering of chapter and paragraph (followed by page number) of the edition of Reinhardt and García-Jalón de al Lama: Alfonso Buenhombre, *La disputa de Abutalib* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2006), 4.3:65.
17. “O Maria utique Deus elegit et purificauit te et elegit te claram super mulieres seculorum.” For the text of Martí, we have followed the edition of Leipzig 1687, *Pugio fidei*, 3, 3, 7, 14; Szpiech, “Citas árabes,” 95 and 98.
18. “O Maria, Deus utique elegit te, purificauit te, elegit te claram super mulieres seculorum.” See Szpiech, “Citas árabes,” 85n36.
19. Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 4.3:65; Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 3, 3, 7, 14 (et passim); *Biblia sacra*, 6:1720.
20. Reinhardt, “Un musulmán,” 207–10.
21. “Dicit Machometus libro secundo zahara sexagesima septima: Eyc, id est, Ihesus, in Iherusalem curauit infirmos, illuminauit cecos, resuscitauit mortuos?” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 5.10:89.
22. “Et curo cecum natum et leprosum et resuscito mortuos,” Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 3.3.7.14; Szpiech, “Citas árabes,” 95 and 98.
23. “Etiam zahara De Familia dicitur quod nullus est qui [sic, lege quem non] tetigerit Sathan preter Eyc, id est, Ihesum, et Mariam.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 4.4:65.
24. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2009), book 59, bāb 11, #3286. The same idea can be found in Muslim ibn al-Ḥajāj al-Qushayrī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm 2010), book 43, bāb 40, #2366c.
25. “Dixit Ebi Horaira . . . quod audiuit . . . Machometum, dicentem: nullus nascitur de filiis Adam quem non tangat Satan quando nascitur . . . preter Mariam et filium eius.” Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 3.3.7.15; Szpiech, “Citas árabes,” 95 and 99.
26. “Dixit Emboria quod audiuit nuntium Dei dicentem: Nullus de filiis Adam nascitur quem non tangat Sathan . . . praeter Mariam et filium eius.” *Biblia sacra*, 6:1720.
27. “Machometus dixit, cum uidisset Ihesum in Iherusalem, quod uidebantur aque prosilire de capite eius, et tamen aqua non erat ibi.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 7.3:139.
28. Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 92, bāb 26, #7128. The same idea can be found in Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 1, bāb 75, #169a and #171.
29. “Johan, fijo de Maria, auie los cabellos amariellos . . . e semeiauan los cabellos del que todos eran moiados e que corrien agua.” Ms. Escorial Y.I.2, fol. 169r. I follow the

- reading of “Ms. Escorial Y.I.2,” as it appears in the database CORDE of the Real Academia Española <http://www.rae.es>, edited by P. Sánchez-Prieto Borja, Rocío Díaz Moreno, and Elena Trujillo Belso. For the theological use of this quotation, see Antoni Biosca i Bas, “*Sine aqua saluari non ualemus*. El agua como purificación de creyentes y de infieles,” in *Ritus infidelium. Miradas interconfesionales sobre las prácticas religiosas en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013), 29–44.
30. For example, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 61, bāb 23, #3547 (and Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, book 43, bāb 31, #2347a): “Narrated Rabi‘a bin Abī ‘Abd al-Rahmān: I heard Anas bin Mālik describing the Prophet saying, ‘... Divine Inspiration was revealed to him when he was forty years old. He stayed ten years in Mecca receiving the Divine Inspiration, and stayed in Medina for ten more years. . . .’ Narrated Anas: ‘Allah sent him (as an Apostle) when he was forty years old. Afterwards he resided in Mecca for ten years and in Medina for ten more years.’” This appears in the *Disputatio* 4, 8–9: “Ipse Machometus dixit in libro secundo suo, qui uocatur Atabalib, quod archangelus Gabriel reuelauerat sibi postquam fuerat adultus, cum autem esset quadraginta annorum, reuersus in Meccam, ubi latuit per tres annos, in quibus composuit Alchoranum.” Alfonso’s text is very similar: “Mahomat auiendo ya quareynta e ocho annos de su edad e nueue que fuera alçado Rey; trabaiauasse mucho de ueuir e de estar siempre lo mas del tiempo en Meca. E alli estando predicaua e dizie mintiendo todas estas cosas que auemos dichas, e aun otras muchas que son de riso e de escarnio e de falsedad. E fazie a todos creer que Grabiél ge las dixiera” (fol. 170r).
 31. Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia Arabum*, ed. José Lozano (Sevilla: U. de Sevilla, 1993).
 32. “Ad primum celum Gabriel me perduxit, et me in isto celo benigne angeli receperunt et cum risu et gaudio respexerunt dicentes ‘bene, bene,’ orantes michi prospera et iocunda.” *Historia Arabum*, 5.
 33. “Et predicatione completa, statim uidentibus omnibus Gabriel archangelus duxit ipsum in primum celum, scilicet, orbem Lune, et omnes angeli erant ibi expectando ipsum, et omnes ipsum bene receperunt cum risu, orantes omnes quod cuncta sibi prospere euenissent.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 5:3:79. Cf. Alfonso X, *Estoria de España*, El Escorial MS Y.I.2, fol. 169r: “After this the angel Gabriel took me, and led me to the first heaven, and the angels who were there came to me and welcomed me, and they were very happy with me, and with great pleasure over this, they looked at each other and said ‘Oh, how very good is this one, oh how good,’ and they all prayed for my good and for my health.” [“Despues desto tomo me ell angel Grabiél, e leuo me suso fastal primero cielo, e los angeles que y estauan uinieron contra mi e recibieron me muy bien, e fueron muy alegres comigo. E con el grand plazer que ende ouieron; catauan se unos a otros e dizien ‘Ay que bien este, ay que bien,’ e orauan me todos, todo bien e toda salud.”]
 34. “Nam enim prima excellentia est quia dicitis quod, cum esset quatuor annorum, uenerunt duo angeli et aperuerunt cor parui Machometi, et extraxerunt inde coagulum sanguinis denigrati, quod postea niuis lauacro abluerunt, et ponderauerunt cor eius cum decem cordibus gentis sue, et postea cum mille, et maius pondere inuentum est. Et unus angelus dixit alteri: ‘si cum omnibus Arabibus in tricina poneretur, omnibus preualeret.’” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 4:8:73. See also Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Historia Arabum*, 1; and Alfonso X, *Estoria de España*, El Escorial MS Y.I.2, fol. 163r.
 35. “Astantibus Albimor et discipulis eius duodecim, inter quos Albimor erat princeps, dixit: ‘me cito oportet mori, sed non uos perturbet mors mea, quia die tertia resurgam,

et sic in perpetuum uobiscum consistam.’ Quod audiens Albimor et dubitans de uerbo in corde suo, non ualens pre desiderio ultra se continere, inquit apud semet ipsum: ‘experiri intendo magistri mei uerbum.’ Tertia die addito, callide in nocte obtulit Machometo in uase lactis efficacissimum uenenum. Quo hausto, sensit se moriturum, nesciens tamen causam sue mortis. Et uocatis ad se Albimor et discipulis eius ac cunctis principibus suis ait: ‘non passus sum ultra in isto corpore infirmo detineri, uado ad recipiendum inmortale corpus, ut in illo uberrime uiuam in eternum . . . Hoc finito, circa uxores Axam et Xapham emisit spiritum. Albimor autem cum discipulis suis custodiuit corpus eius. Et post duodecim dies, nimio fetore erumpente, cum iam sustinere non possent eis abscondentibus, deprehensi a principibus coacte habuerunt cum maxima turba principum sepelire eum in Medina Rusul, quam Latini uocant Ciuitas Nuntii.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 7.2:135–37.

36. “Decimo autem regni sui anno, quia dixerat se moriturum et tercia die resurrexerunt, Albimor discipulus eius uolens experiri utrum uere a morte resurgeret, callide Machometo efficacissimum uenenum obtulit, quo statim repentina mutatione Machomet mortis sue terminum sensit. (. . .) Discipuli uero eius diligenter custodiebant corpus ipsius, expectantes quod resurgeret. Sed nimio erumpente fetore, cum iam sustinere non possent, eis abscondentibus Albimor post undecimam diem reperit corpus eius a canibus dilaniatum, et diligenter colligens ossa illius cum magno Sarraceno conuentu sepeleuit eum in Medina Rassul, que Latine Ciuitas Nuntii dicitur.” Lucas de Tuy, *Chronicon Mundi*, ed. Emma Falque (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 3, 6. We can also compare this with Alfonso X, *Estoria de España*, fol. 171r.
37. “Scis, et uere scis et uidisti, cum ego et tu essemus in dicto templo cum maximo timore ne aliquis de societate nostra nos acusaret qualiter tu eras Hebreus, et ego simulate te uocabam consobrinum meum per te rogatus, ut de Cepta Iherosolimam ascenderes mecum fecte sub nomine Mauri taliter ut secrete posses totam Ciuitatem et patriam et Templum perscrutari, perquirere et uidere.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 3.5:59.
38. “Per Alchoranum, quem michi legisti apud Mecham, cuius transumptum in Arabico concessisti, quem asportauit, et apud me reconditum habeo.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 4.1:61. “te recordare temporis in quo legisti Esdram in Hiatrib.” 4.1:109.
39. “Tu dixisti michi, legendo apud Marrochium librum istum.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 3.2:55. “Quando michi legebas Alchoranum apud Marrochium.” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 3.2:73.
40. “Cum tu esses in Marrochio, et ego essem uocatus per regem Olmleic, quidam de gente uestra uenit ad regem et dixit sibi: ‘ego sum prece Ihesu, filii Marie, quem colunt Christiani, et ipse non acceptat eorum orationes quia asserunt ipsum mortuum fuisse, quia ipse uiuit ultra montes Caspios et cito ueniet ad liberandum populum Iudeorum, ideo prepara domum tuam ad recipiendum ipsum.’” Buenhombre, *La disputa*, 5.25:107.
41. “Alii dicunt quod est ultra montes Caspios expectans preceptum Domini de liberatione populi” *Biblia sacra*, 6:1708.
42. John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 171.
43. Cándida Ferrero, “Inter Saracenos. Mártires franciscanos en el norte de África y en la Península Ibérica (ss. XIII–XVII),” *Frate Francesco* 77, no. 2 (2011): 261–77.

44. Tolan, *Saracens*, 233–42. The same idea can be found in the *Epistola ad Abdalla* of Pere Marsili, in Antoni Biosca i Bas, “La carta contra el converso mallorquí Abdalá: una obra inédita de Pere Marsili,” *Fratre Francesco* 78, no. 2 (2012): 387–401. The complete critical edition of this text will appear in my *Opera Omnia Petri Marsili*, in the collection *Corpus Christianorum*.
45. André Berthier, “Les Écoles de langues orientales fondées au XIIIe siècle par les Dominicains en Espagne et en Afrique,” *Revue Africaine* 73 (1932): 90–103; Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
46. The *Disputatio* has been termed by John Tolan “the epitome of the failure of the Dominican ambition to convert the Jewish and Muslims worlds to Christianity through disputation,” *Saracens*, 255. Fernando González Muñoz describes the *Disputatio* as “un divertimento o ejercicio escolar más que una propuesta seria de renovación de la estrategia predicadora dominicana.” See his review of Reinhardt and García-Jalón de la Lama, *La disputa de Abutalib*, *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 5 (2008), 490.

6. Reconstructing Medieval Jewish–Christian Disputations Ursula Ragacs

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Piero Capelli and Marina Rustow for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. The following study is based on an earlier work of mine, which I have updated with new insights. See Ursula Ragacs, “Christliche Gelehrsamkeit versus rabbinische Tradition: Das *Capistrum Iudaeorum* des Raimund Martini und die Disputation von Barcelona,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 29 (2002): 57–78.
2. Text to be found in Yitzhaq Baer, “Le-Bikkoret ha-vikkuhim shel R. Yeḥiel mi-Paris ve-R. Moshe ben Naḥman,” *Tarbiz* 2, no. 2 (1931): 172–87 at 185–87.
3. In the following text I quote either the edition of Moritz Steinschneider, *Nachmanidis disputatio publica pro fide Judaica (a. 1263) e Codd. MSS. recognita addita ejusdem expositione in Jesaiam LIII* (Berlin: Vendunt A. Asher & Co. Stettin: Printed by E. Schrentzel, 1860), 5–22; or the one of Chaim D. Chavel in Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei Rabenu Moshe ben Naḥman*, ed. Ch. D. Chavel, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1973), 1:302–20, based on Steinschneider.
4. See Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews, The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 103–69; and Jeremy Cohen, “Vikkuaḥ pariz ha-shenei ve-ha-pulemos ha-yehudi-ha-nozri shel ha-me’ah ha-shelosh-esreh,” *Tarbiz* 68, no. 4 (1999): 555–79.
5. For Martí’s life, his works, his understanding of Jewish literature and his stance toward the Jews, see also Ursula Ragacs, *Mit Zaum und Zügel muss man ihr Ungestüm bändigen. Ps 32,9, Ein Beitrag zur christlichen Hebraistik und antijüdischen Polemik im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 14–19 and 169–76.
6. Text to be found in Ramon Martí, *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, 2 vols. (Würzburg: Echter, Altenberge: Telos, 1990; and Altenberge: Oros, 1993).
7. Translation mine. Biblical passages follow the King James Bible.
8. Translation mine. Hebrew text according to Steinschneider, *Nachmanidis disputatio*, 5.

9. See Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:302, notes.
10. *Milḥemet ḥovah* (Constantinople, 1710), 1a–13a.
11. Johannes Christophorus Wagenseil, *Tela ignea Satanae*, 2 vols. (Altdorf: Johann Heinrich Schönnerstädt, 1681), 2:24–60 in Hebrew with Latin translation.
12. For details on this manuscript, see Ursula Ragacs, “Edieren oder nicht edieren . . . ? Überlegungen zu einer Neuedition des hebräischen Berichtes über die Disputation von Barcelona 1263, Teil 2: Die Handschriften,” *Judaica* 65 (2009): 239–58 at 252–53 and after.
13. See Moritz Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum Hebraeorum in bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin: A. Friedlaender, 1852–60), 1955–58 at 1955: “ex MS. initio imperf.” and Steinschneider, *Nachmanidis disputatio*, 3, at the beginning of the introduction.
14. Wagenseil, *Tela*, 2: 23–24: “Hic deficit Disputatio R. Jehielis in MS. cum qua tamen ibi continuo orationis filio [sic!] connectuntur pauca quaedam alia, quae prorsus ad rem non pertinent, & ideo a nobis omittuntur, facientes sic transitum ad R. Nachmanidis Disputationem, similiter citra ullam distinctionis notam cum caeteris nimis perperam cohaerentem.”
15. Translation mine. Hebrew text according to Wagenseil, *Tela*, 2:24.
16. See Ursula Ragacs, “Lost and Found: One of Steinschneider’s Manuscripts of Nachmanides’ *Wikkuah*,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 37 (2011–12): 137–45.
17. Translation mine. Hebrew text according to Steinschneider, *Nachmanidis disputatio*, 5.
18. Hyam Maccoby, ed. and trans., *Judaism on Trial, Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1982), 97–101. Others, like Hans-Georg von Mutius, *Die christlich-jüdische Zwangsdisputation zu Barcelona, Nach dem hebräischen Protokoll des Moses Nachmanides* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982), 24, understood that Nahmanides’s focus was on the Rashi text and therefore felt no need to explain the difficulty Maccoby saw.
19. The text was published twice: Judah M. Rosenthal, “Vikkuaḥ dati bein ḥakham be-shem Menaḥem u-vein ha-mumar ve-ha-nazir ha-dominiani Pablo Kristiani,” in *Hagut Ivrit be-America*, ed. Menaḥem Zohori, Aryeh Tartakover, Haim Ormian, 3 vols. (Tel Aviv: Yavneh Publ. House, 1974), 3:62–74; and Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris. Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Peeters, 1994), 36–39 for Hebrew text, translation in French 39–43. For a summary of the different scholarly opinions on this text and a comparison with the second Disputation of Paris, see Ursula Ragacs, *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 100–106.
20. Translation mine. Hebrew text according to Rosenthal, “Vikkuaḥ,” 62.
21. Robert Chazan, “A Medieval Hebrew Polemical Mélange,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51 (1980): 89–110 at 105–6.
22. *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. Isidore Epstein, 34 vols. (London: Soncino, 1935–59), 12:282 (Seder Neziqin 3:282).
23. The translator of this part of Sanhedrin is Jacob Shachter, but according to the “prefatory note by the editor” it was Epstein himself who inserted alternative explanations in square brackets.
24. Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Horev [1903]), 2:1413, mentioning BT Giṭṭin 14b, *Qarov le-malkhut*, “connected with royalty, influential.”

25. “Dominus Iesus erat propinquus regni; quod idem est dictum, quod esse de semine David.” Text according to Ramon Martí, *Capistrum* 2:116.
26. “Dixit Ula, Jesus Nazarenus propinquus fuit regno, id est familiae regiae.” Ramon Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 416.
27. Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 416.
28. For the Hebrew text, see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1.57. (Ed. Solomon Buber [Wilna: Romm, 1899], 45a–b). The English translation can be found in *The Midrash Rabbah*, ed. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon, 10 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1961), vol. 7. A parallel text can be found in the Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 2.4 (5a).
29. Since in the following text no text critical or philological questions are raised, I do not quote the Hebrew texts verbatim. Instead I refer to the Hebrew edition of Chavel in Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei Ramban*, and quote his English translations as given in Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings and Discourses*, trans. Ch. B. Chavel, 2 vols. (New York: Shilo Publ. House, 1978), 2:656–96.
30. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2: 664–65; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
31. Text to be found in: *Amulonis epistola, seu liber contra Judaeos ad Carolum regem*, in J. P. Migne ed., *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1844–55), 116:148.
32. Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 348–49.
33. Martí, *Capistrum*, 1:80: “error Iudaeorum.”
34. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:665; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
35. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:665; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
36. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:665, with the omission of one footnote. Also, Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
37. This name is given in the manuscripts in slightly different variants.
38. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:665; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
39. See Baer, “Le-Bikkoret ha-vikkuḥim,” 186.
40. Exodus 5:1.
41. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:665–66; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:306.
42. Moses ben Naḥman, *Writings*, 2:667–68; *Kitvei Ramban*, 1:307.
43. The quotation from *Eikha Rabbah* is found in the Latin text as follows: “Ad quod cum respondere non posset, victus necessariis probationibus et auctoritatibus concessit, Christum sive Messiam, iam sunt transacti M anni, natum in Bethlehem fuisse.” Baer, “Le-Bikkoret ha-vikkuḥim,” 186.
44. Martí, *Pugio*, 348–49: “Si quis vero institerit, confitebuntur quamvis inviti Messiam suum natum in die destructionis templi, nondum tamen venisse fatentur. Haec autem insania inde prolabitur, ubi in libro Beracoth Hierosolymitano hoc modo legitur. . . . Et nota quod hoc idem habetur apud eos in Ech. Rabati super illud. . . . Ex his, & similibus habet ortum insania [sic] Judaeorum dicentium Messiam fuisse natum in die destructionis templi.”
45. See above, note 1.
46. For this point of view, see Israel Jacob Yuval, *Shenei Goyyim be-ṿiṭnekh: Yehudim ve-Nozrim—dimuyyim ha-dadiyyim* (Tel Aviv: ‘Am ‘Oved, 2000), xiv in the preface.

7. *Reconstructing Thirteenth-Century Jewish–Christian Polemic:**From Paris 1240 to Barcelona 1263 and Back Again*

Harvey J. Hames

1. S. Grünbaum, *Sefer Vikkuah R. Yeḥiel* (Thorn: C. Dombrowski 1873) 1 (hereafter, *Vikkuah*). This edition is based on the Paris manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, hebr. Ms. 712) discussed below.
2. The Latin source indicates that this process was not a disputation. Firstly, the title refers to what happened as “Confessio magistri Vivo”—the confession of Rabbi Yeḥiel. Secondly, just before the confession, the text has “*inquirere super premis veritatem*”—the verb indicates an investigation or examination, not a disputation. See Isidore Loeb, “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud,” *Revue des Études Juives* 1 (1880): 247–61; 2 (1881): 248–70; 3 (1881): 39–57 at 55.
3. See Loeb, “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud,” at 55–57. For the thirty-five accusations compiled by Nicholas Donin in Gregory IX’s letter, see 2:253–70; 3:39–55. See also *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris 1240*, trans. John Friedman and Jean Connell Hoff, intro. Robert Chazan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 102–21.
4. See Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 63–64. However, see also P. L. Rose, “When Was the Talmud Burnt at Paris? A Critical Examination of the Christian and Jewish Sources and a New Dating: June 1241,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 62, no. 2 (2011): 324–39; Kenneth Stow, “The Church and the Jews,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. D. S. H. Abulafia, 7 vols. in 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5:211–12; and André Tuilier, “La condamnation du Talmud par les maîtres universitaires Parisiens, ses causes et ses conséquences politiques et idéologiques,” in *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris 1242–1244*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris: CERF, 1999), 59–78 at 59–67, who suggests a double burning in 1242 and 1244.
5. Yitzhak Baer, “Le-Bikkoret ha-vikkuḥim shel R. Yeḥiel mi-Paris ve-R. Moshe ben Naḥman,” *Tarbiz* 2, no. 2 (1931): 172–87; Judah Rosenthal, “The Talmud on Trial,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 47 (1956): 58–76, and 145–69 (which includes an English translation of the aforementioned thirty-five articles); Tuilier, “La condemnation”; Saadia R. Eisenberg, “Reading Medieval Religious Disputation: The 1240 ‘Debate’ between Rabbi Yeḥiel of Paris and Friar Nicholas Donin” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 12–29. There are a number of errors in Eisenberg’s presentation, such as, for instance, the certainty of Donin being a Dominican or that he wrote the Christian version of what occurred, and the supposition that Yeḥiel penned the Hebrew version when it was most likely Joseph ben Nathan Official who wrote the account. However, his insistence on contextualizing the Christian text and the Jewish text in their separate intellectual ambits is a move in the right direction.
6. Chen Merchavia, *Ha-Talmud bi-re’i ha-Nazrut: ha-yahas le-sifrut yisra’el she-le-ahar ha-miqra’ ba-’olam ha-nozri bi-yemei ha-beinayyim 500–1248* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1970), 242; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 62–3. Cohen suggests that Loeb, “La controverse,” 55, contains evidence of the two separate processes—this is far from clear or explicit in the text.
7. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS hebr., 712. See Judah Galinsky, “Mishpaṭ ha-Talmud bi-shnat 1240 be-Paris: ‘Vikkuah R. Yeḥiel’ ve-‘sefer ha-mizvot’ shel R. Mosheh mi-Cuzi,”

Shenaton ha-Mishpat ha-‘Ivri 22 (2001–3): 45–69, who prefers the Moscow manuscript (see note 13 below) and uses it extensively. See the postscript of this article for a discussion of the merits of Galinsky’s argument. It is my opinion that the Paris manuscript is the earlier of the two, while the Moscow manuscript reflects a later reworking of the material. One of the problems with the Paris manuscript relates to a passage in the *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne’* composed by Joseph Official, which precedes the text of the disputation in the manuscript, where there are lacunae that are unexpected if the copyist was making a copy of the original. For instance, on fol. 30v, before the start of the questions dealing with Psalms, Joseph talks about his ancestors and a list of colleagues whose comments are found in the work, listing his brother Rabbi Eliyahu and Eliyahu of Troyes, and then there is a lacuna where there should be another name. The scribe wrote Yehiel but then deleted it, perhaps wanting to refer to Yehiel of Paris, which makes some sense because there then follows a large number of phrases and biblical verses in praise of this deleted name. In the margin in a different hand is written “Shmu’el ben ha-haver R. David” (Samuel, son of our companion, David).

8. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS hebr. 712, fols. 1v–2v.
9. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS hebr. 712, fols. 43r and 43v, respectively.
10. This may have messianic connotations, as this phrase appears in the prophecy dealing with the Root of Jesse (*Hoter Yishai*) in Isaiah 10. The commentators agree that this refers to the dignity and respect afforded to the messianic king. However, here it is clearly referring to Yehiel’s final resting place.
11. “5000 A.M., 1240 according to their reckoning” (Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 16). Israel J. Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 258–66, shows that *aḥarit* refers explicitly to the year 5000 A.M./1240 A.D. and implies apocalyptic expectation. The full Hebrew text of the Paris manuscript makes clear that *aḥarit* was known as another way of referring to this monumental year; however, the continuation shows that this was more eschatological than apocalyptic, in that it says “and the Rock (a reference to God) will make this millennium (*aḥarit*) better than the previous one.” Here the use of the term *aḥarit* can no longer be a reference to the year itself, but to the coming millennium, as by the time of the writing of the manuscript, 1240 was long over.
12. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS hebr. 712, fols. 58r–58v.
13. The acrostic and colophon were published in Joseph ben Nathan Official, *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne’*, ed. J. Rosenthal (Jerusalem: Mekitzei Nirdamim, 1970), 141–42. This scribe also wrote additional passages in the margins and at the start of *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne’*.
14. *Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne’*, paras. 36, 59. See also note 7 above for another possible mention of Yehiel in the text.
15. Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 1390. Israel Ta-Shma described this manuscript in his “Rabbi Yehiel de Paris,” *Annuaire de l’Ecole pratique de hautes études. Section des sciences religieuses* 99 (1990–91): 215–19.
16. See note 10 above. What was commanded on Yehiel’s deathbed was to compose the text depicting the disputation, or Joseph ben Nathan Official wanted to imply that he was not inventing this text but following the request of his teacher.
17. Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 1390, fol. 101v.
18. BT Kiddushin 30a.

19. BT Sanhedrin 38b.
20. Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 1390, fol. 102v.
21. See Simḥa Emmanuel, “R. Yeḥi’el mi-Paris: toledotav ve-ziqato le-erez yisra’el,” *Shalem* 8 (2009): 86–99.
22. I would like to thank my colleague Danny Lasker for pointing this out in a conversation. His comment led to the train of thought dealing with the time of the composition of the Hebrew version of the events of Paris in 1240.
23. The Official family moved from Provence to the area around Paris early in the thirteenth century. This, of course, does not prohibit continued contact with Provence, and hence, also facilitates possession of Jacob ben Reuben’s polemical work written circa 1170. See Harvey J. Hames, “‘Urinating on the Cross’: Christianity as Seen in the *Sefer Yoseph ha-Mekaneh* (c. 1260) and in Light of Paris 1240,” in *Ritus Infidilium. Miradas interconfesionales sobre las prácticas religiosas en la Edad Media*, ed. José Martínez Gázquez and John Tolan (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013), 209–20.
24. For an English translation of the liturgical poem by Meir of Rothenberg, see *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris 1240*, 169–72; See also Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 64n23.
25. For the pope’s letters (one to the monarchs of Western Europe and the other to the heads of the mendicant orders), see Merchavia, *Ha-Talmud*, 446–48; and *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris 1240*, 93–94.
26. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 64–8.
27. The literature on the Barcelona Disputation is vast and varied. For the best summations of scholarly opinion to date, see Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and Nina Caputo, *Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia. History, Community and Messianism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 91–127. See also Harvey J. Hames, “Rethinking the Dynamics of Late Medieval Jewish–Christian Polemics: From Friar Paul to Alfonso de Valladolid,” in *Cultural Hybridities: Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshota (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).
28. On this second disputation, see Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris. Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Peeters, 1994); and Jeremy Cohen, “Vikkuaḥ pariz ha-shenei ve-ha-pulemos ha-yehudi-ha-nozri shel ha-me’ah ha-shelosh-esreh,” *Tarbiz* 68, no. 4 (1999): 557–79.
29. See Harvey J. Hames, *The Art of Conversion: Christianity and Kabbalah in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 31–82, for differences between *Ashkenaz* (France and Germany) and *Sefarad* (the Iberian Peninsula, southern France and North Africa). See also Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); and Talya Fishman, “Rhineland Pietist Approach to Prayer and the Textualization of Rabbinic Culture in Medieval Northern Europe,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11 (2004): 313–31.
30. Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 1: “with the aid of the Franciscans, who praise idols.” See Merchavia, *Ha-Talmud*, 237. See also Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 60–1.
31. In a forthcoming article, Piero Capelli suggests that Donin’s comment (in the Hebrew version) about the Talmud being written four hundred years earlier might reflect the arrival of the Talmud on the Iberian Peninsula in the ninth century. This is an intriguing suggestion. However, it is interesting that Nahmanides also mentions four

hundred years when talking about the antiquity of the Talmud, arguing that Rav Ashi, the editor of the Talmud, lived some four hundred years after Christ, hence attempting to negate Friar Paul's use of the Talmud by showing that if the rabbis continued to adhere to Judaism in the centuries after Jesus, they could not have been convinced that he was the Messiah. See Piero Capelli, "Jewish Converts in Jewish-Christian Intellectual Polemics in the Middle Ages," in *Intricate Interfaith Networks: Quotidian Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Middle Ages*, ed. E. Shoham-Steiner (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), ca. n. 54. For Friar Paul's words, see Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei Rabenu Moshe ben Naḥman*, ed. Ch. D. Chavel, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1963), 1:302, para. 8. Following the line of argument developed here, Joseph—who has Rabbi Yeḥiel predate the Talmud to Jesus, which he clearly thinks is a better defense than postdating it, as Nahmanides did—perhaps takes the idea of the four hundred years from Nahmanides's text in order to allow Yeḥiel to develop his response. Further on in the Barcelona debate, Friar Paul, according to Nahmanides, referring to Maimonides's claims that the Jews "had no scholar like him for the past four hundred years" (Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei*, 1:315, para. 72), here, seemingly, making a direct reference to the arrival of the Talmud on the Iberian Peninsula, which makes great sense as Friar Paul wants to give Maimonides the same authority as the Talmud so that he can prove his point.

32. Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei*, 1:302–3, paras. 2–4; Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 2
33. In a different study ("'Fear God, My Son, and King': Relations between Nahmanides and King James I at the Barcelona Disputation," *Hispania Judaica* 10 [2014], 6–19), I explore the perceived relationship of Nahmanides with King James I, as set out in the Hebrew text. Nahmanides views himself and the king almost as equals and the Dominicans as underlings. He and the king set the agenda of the disputation. It is interesting that in the stage version (*The Disputation*, filmed in 1991) of the Barcelona Disputation adapted by Haim Maccoby, the king relates to Nahmanides in a far better manner than he does to the Dominicans, while the queen is far more sympathetic to the latter.
34. See BT, Rosh ha-Shana, 17a.
35. Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 2.
36. Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei*, 1:306 para. 20.
37. Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei*, 1:308 para. 39.
38. See Shalem Yahalom, "Vikkuaḥ Barzelonah u-ma'amad ha-haggadah be-mishnat ha-Ramban," *Zion* 69, no. 1 (2004): 25–43, and the bibliography cited there.
39. See Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Servants of Kings and Not Servants of Servants: Some Aspects of the Political History of the Jews* (Atlanta: Emory University Press, 2005) on the issue of court Jews and their closeness to royalty.
40. See William C. Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews from Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), and Jacques Le Goff, "Saint Louis et les juifs," in *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris 1242–1244*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris: CERF, 1999), 39–46 at 41–3.
41. See Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 2, 3, 6 respectively.
42. There is an image in the Bible moralisée (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 11560, fol. 87v), that according to Alex J. Novikoff might reflect the disputation of 1240. See Alex J. Novikoff, "Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation,"

American Historical Review (2012), 331–64. A detailed study of this manuscript (one of three that make up this Bible) suggests that it was commissioned by Blanche of Castile, together with the Toledo *Bible moralisée*, on the occasion of the marriage of her son, Louis VIII, and Marguerite of Provence in 1234. There is strong evidence that these two Bibles were prepared together and many of the medallions in both Bibles were made using pressure-traced under-drawings, hence they come from the same source. It is, therefore, very unlikely that the aforementioned medallion can be taken as early evidence for the disputation in Paris in 1240. See the detailed study of John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées*, 2 vols. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 1:139–87. See also Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

43. See Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 16. The king is also mentioned in passing in the introduction to the disputation when Nicholas Donin presses his attack on the Talmud before the king and bishops. See Grünbaum, *Vikkuaḥ*, 1. In the Moscow manuscript, there is a more elaborate introduction to the disputation where the king is present in a discussion between R. Yehiel and Nicholas Donin about who would be on the royal commission. See Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg, 1390, fol. 86a.
44. See the studies cited in note 40 above.
45. See Merchavia, *Ha-Talmud*, 455–59. For the evolution of the disputation from the Christian world to the arena of interreligious polemic, see the impressive study of Novikoff, “Toward a Cultural History of Scholastic Disputation.” Toward the end of the article, Novikoff focuses on Paris 1240 as the prime example of this cultural transfer from internal scholastic disputations to the field of Jewish–Christian polemic. In Harvey J. Hames, “Reason and Faith: Inter-religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the Thirteenth Century,” in *Religious Apologetics—Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yossef Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 267–84, I argued that the disputations of 1240 and Barcelona 1263 were essentially a transfer of the quodlibetal disputation of the university to the field of Jewish–Christian polemics. Hence, I totally agree with Novikoff’s far superior presentation of this position. However, the Barcelona Disputation, rather than Paris 1240, is really the prime example, as it is the first time this method is used by Friar Paul in order to establish Christian truth in the public sphere. In this context, it is interesting to consider whether the contents of the Talmud itself influenced Friar Paul’s decision to hold a disputation, as the folios of Talmud contain many examples of rabbinic disputations, albeit, in brief, in order to arrive at legal conclusions. Friar Paul, an apostate, would have been well aware of the rabbinic method of learning, and this again supports my supposition that Barcelona 1263, where the Talmud is actually used as a proof text, rather than the events in Paris in the 1240s, where the Talmud is condemned and burned, should be seen as the first public disputation and the model for the Hebrew text of Paris 1240 discussed in this article.
46. See Anna Sapir-Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations 1000–1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (Harlow: Longman, 2011), 78–81.
47. It is a point not stressed enough that the success of any sustained campaign against the Jews of any Latin kingdom was dependent on the support of the king or local rulers. If the rulers were sympathetic to the cause, conversion or expulsion would follow;

- if they were not, the campaigns were doomed to failure. For the Crown of Aragon, see Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
48. Judah Galinsky, “The Different Versions of the ‘Talmud Trial’ of Paris in 1240,” in *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations: In Honor of David Berger*, ed. E. Carlebach and J. J. Schacter (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 109–40.
 49. Galinsky, “The Different Versions,” 139–40, for a summary of the differences between the two introductions.
 50. Galinsky, “The Different Versions,” 132–35.
 51. Galinsky, “The Different Versions,” 136.
8. *A Christianized Sephardic Critique of Rashi’s Peshat in Pablo de Santa María’s Additiones ad Postillam Nicolai de Lyra Yosi Yisraeli*

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1. For biographical details, see Amador de los Ríos, *Historia social, política y religiosa de los Judíos de España y Portugal*, 3 vols. (Madrid: T. Fortanet, 1875–6), 2:490–94; Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos D. Pablo de Santa María y D. Alfonso de Cartagena: Obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores* (Madrid: CSIC, 1942); Yitzhak F. Baer, *Toledot ha-Yehudim bi-Sefarad ha-Nozrit*, 2nd ed. (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1965), 308–11; Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos: Historia de la judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios* (Madrid: CSIC, 1952); Francisco Cantera Burgos, “Selomó Ha-Leví, rehén en Inglaterra en 1389,” in *Homenaje a Millás-Vallicrosa*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: CSIC, 1954), 1:301–7. See also the extensive account of Pablo’s alleged anti-Jewish career in Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth-Century Spain*, 2nd ed. (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2001), 168–206; and further bibliographical notes in Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 136–44.
2. Although often dated to 1429, the *Additiones* were in fact compiled from commentaries written over a much longer period of time, from the mid-1390s and up to 1431, as can be shown from textual evidence from the commentaries themselves.
3. As to the *Postilla* and its remarkable position as “the standard work on the Bible in the late Middle Ages,” see Deena Copeland Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 117–31. For a partial list of manuscripts of the *Additiones*, see Klaus Reinhardt and Horacio Santiago-Otero, *Biblioteca bíblica ibérica medieval* (Madrid: CSIC, 1986), 241–43. As to its circulation in the printed editions, together with the *Postilla*, see Edward E. Gosselin, “A Listing of the Printed Editions of Nicolaus de Lyra,” *Traditio* 26 (1970): 399–426.
4. J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1844–55), 113:35–60. In addition to the theoretical discussion, the prologue includes also an important personal testimony. About this section of the prologue, see Ryan

- Szpiech, "A Father's Bequest: Augustinian Typology and Personal Testimony in the Conversion Narrative of Solomon Halvei/Pablo De Santa María," in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Decter and Arturo Prats (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 177–98; Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 41–51.
5. Based on the Augustinian tradition of literal argumentation and the rediscovered Aristotelian principles of investigation, the literal sense was recognized in the twelfth century as a central element in the establishment of Christian theology. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978). On the Aristotelian shift in the perception of causality and verbal signification that accompanied the rise of scholasticism and its influence on the literal sense in the Middle Ages, see Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 75–94; and Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 31–48. However, in order to reconcile the literalist assumptions of the emerging science of theology with traditional Christian readings of scripture, commentators began to include in their literal interpretations allegorical and figurative readings that were formerly regarded as pertaining to the spiritual sense. Ocker described this development in terms of a rhetorical and poetic awakening, arguing that by the fourteenth century the developments in scholastic education had led to new literary sensitivities that encouraged scholars to address the literal sense of scripture in more poetic and rhetorical terms, which, in their turn, weakened the traditional distinctions between the literal and the spiritual.
 6. This was illustrated most vividly in Karlfried Froehlich, "Always to Keep the Literal Sense in Holy Scriptures Means to Kill One's Soul: The State of Biblical Hermeneutics at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century," in *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Earl Miner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 20–48.
 7. See Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1959–64), 4:354–59; James Samuel Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 86–101. Lubac and Preus were right to criticize their predecessors who took Pablo as a representative of an allegorist party that objected to the literal-scientific parameters of the scriptural scrutiny promoted by Lyra. For recent discussions of the prologue, see also Ryan Szpiech, "Scrutinizing History: Polemic and Exegesis in Pablo de Santa María's *Siete edades del mundo*," *Medieval Encounters* 16 (2010): 96–142 at 114–16; and Ian Christopher Levy, "The Literal Sense of Scripture and the Search for Truth in the Late Middle Ages," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 104 (2009): 818–25.
 8. De Lubac (*Exégèse*, 3:357) and Preus (*From Shadow*, 86) diminished the differences between Pablo and Lyra, arguing they were "saying about the same thing" and were divided "only on peripheral issues." In that same spirit, it was recently suggested that Pablo "admired" Lyra (Levy, "The Literal Sense," 818). I would suggest that this notion is in need of a deep revision since, as Herman Hailperin noted, for Pablo "the word

‘additio’ meant that which is to be said by counter argument, not by way of extension.” Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 259.

9. *Postilla litteralis Nicolai Lyrani, cum expositionibus . . . et Additiones Pauli Burgen-sis . . .* (Cologne: Ulrichus Zell, c. 1483), Genesis 8: “Inquirere quot cubitis arca intrasset aquam [tempore diluvii], videtur magis curiosum quam utile, cum non solum habere notitiam certam de hoc nullam praestat cognitionem utilem in credendis, nec in agendis, sed nec etiam requiritur ad planam litterae expositionem, quantumcunque enim arca aquam intrasset, sive plus, sive minus non variatur ex hoc aliquid in expositione litterae, ut patet intuitu, et ideo Glossa nostra mentionem de hoc non facit, nec ut credo aliquis sanctorum, nec etiam doctorum hebraeorum, nisi solum Ra.Sa. qui in huiusmodi vanis quaesitis per modum quaestionis facit longam altercationem. Dato etiam, quod haec inquisitio requiretetur, vel esset aliquid utilis, rationes tamen a postillatore ad hoc probandum inductae nullam videntur habere efficaciam.”
10. According to the four-fold structure as explained by the famous rhyme: “Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria; Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.”
11. For example, in his prologue to the *Additiones* Pablo responded to Lyra’s invocation of Cassian’s famous four-fold sense model, by presenting a slightly modified *quadruplex* structure, probably extracted from Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 7.q.6.a.2.ad.5, in *S. Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia ut sunt in indice thomistico*, ed. Roberto Busa (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 3:479, which stressed the potential overlap of the four meanings within the first level of the literal sense.
12. *Additiones*, in *Postilla litteralis Nicolai Lyrani*, Prologus super *Additiones*: “Unde secundum Augustinum in III de Doctrina Christiana, dubia sunt determinanda secundum sententiam, quae de Scripturarum planioribus locis accipitur. Constat autem quod planiora loca sunt illa quae planius litterae consonant”; and see *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. M.P.H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 3.3.2; 132.
13. However, it is doubtful, to say the least, whether Augustine indeed referred to literal parameters and not to doctrinal clarity when he used the word “plain” in this context. See Preus, *From Shadow*, 12–14; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 46.
14. The Franciscan Friar Matthias Döring (d. 1469) who composed a vast collection of responses to all the *additiones* that he found offensive against Lyra (known as the *Replica* or as the *Defensorium postillae Nicolai Lyrani*), began his response to this *additio* by bringing up this argument.
15. See Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 95–97; and Lubac, *Exégèse*, 3:317–28.
16. On the exegetical method of “questions,” see Dahan, *L’Exégèse chrétienne de la Bible en occident médiéval, XII–XIV siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 131–34, 142–45, 284–87.
17. *Additiones*, Gen. 8: “Si autem quis dicat, cum praedicta quaestio (ut dixi) sit potius curiosa quam utilis, cur circa eam tantam fecerim altercationem? Dicendum, quod hoc introduxi ad ostendendum ineptitudinem ipsius Ra. Sa. in expositione sacrae scripturae, licet eum frequenter alleget postillator.”
18. See English edition, Zvi (Heinrich) Graetz, *History of the Jews: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, trans. Bella Löwy, 5 vols. (London: Myers & Co., 1904), 4:200.
19. Américo Castro, if to give only one example, referred to Pablo as an “inquisitor of his own people,” *The Structure of Spanish History*, trans. Edmund L. King (Princeton,

- N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954), 538. But the most significant study that reaffirmed this misleading notion, specifically with regard to the *Additiones*, is Chen Merchavia, “The Talmud in the *Additiones* of Paul of Burgos,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (1965): 115–34.
20. See further on Pablo’s traits of Jewish scholarship in my “Constructing and Undermining *Converso* Jewishness: Profiat Duran and Pablo de Santa María,” in *Religious Conversion: History, Experience, and Meaning*, ed. Miri Rubin and Ira Katznelson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 185–217 at 198–212.
 21. For the English translation, see Alastair J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–1375: The Commentary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 270. About Lyra’s treatment of Rashi, see Herman Hailperin, *Rashi*, 137–246; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 170–80; Gilbert Dahan, “La place de Rachi dans l’histoire de l’exégèse biblique et son utilisation dans l’exégèse chrétienne du Moyen Âge,” in *Héritages de Rachi*, ed. René Samuel Sirat (Paris: Eclat, 2006), 95–115; Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers*, 32–60; and Ari Geiger, “A Student and an Opponent: Nicholas and His Jewish Sources,” in *Nicolas de Lyre, franciscain du XIVe siècle, exégète et théologien*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes, 2011), 167–207.
 22. Of course by this time many Christians were aware of the Jewish Talmudic fables, i.e., of the *derash* commentaries (Gilbert Dahan, *L’Exégèse chrétienne de la Bible*, 376–87). In fact, even Rashi’s commentaries were condemned in the famous ‘Extractiones de Talmud’ as containing Talmudic fables and pertaining to neither the literal nor the spiritual sense. See Hailperin, *Rashi*, 116–28; Gilbert Dahan, “Rashi, sujet de la controverse de 1240,” *Archives juives* 14 (1978): 43–54; and Ivan G. Marcus, “Rashi’s Choice: The Humash Commentary as Rewritten Midrash,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History: Festschrift in Honor of Robert Chazan*, ed. David Engel, Lawrence H. Schiffman and Elliot R. Wolfson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 29–45 at 41–43. Yet, these *fabulae* of the Jews were mostly acknowledged and addressed in a polemical context, while in the sphere of “biblical Hebraism,” it was still stressed that “the literal sense is the Jewish explanation,” as demonstrated by Lyra. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 156–73 and especially 169, 171; and Hailperin, *Rashi*, 129–34. See also Lyra’s relatively few critical assessments of Rashi in Geiger, “A Student,” 195–99.
 23. Aside of the studies mentioned in note 1, see also Eleazar Gutwirth, “From Jewish to *Converso* Humour in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 67, no. 3 (1990): 223–33 and esp. 227; and Yisraeli, “Constructing and Undermining *Converso* Jewishness.”
 24. *Additiones*, Prologus super *Additiones*: “ut ipse dicit in secundo prologo, inter doctores Hebraycos maxime inducit rabbi Sal., qui inter eos rationabilius ad declarationem sensus litteralis, ut asserit, fuit locutus: cuius oppositum est manifestum apud Hebraeos: qui licet ipsum Ra. Sal. reputent solemnem doctorem in thalmodicis, non tamen in his quae pertinent ad fidei et sacrae Scripturae expositionem; sed potius inter eos reputantur maiores, seu solemniore in hujusmodi expositionibus quidam alii, ut Rabbi Moyses Aegyptius, [Rabbi Moyses] Gerundensis, et Rabbi Abenhazra, et alii, prout iam videbitur.”
 25. For Lyra’s Jewish sources, see Geiger, “A Student.”
 26. In his commentary to Genesis 3:8

27. See Raphael Loewe, “The ‘Plain’ Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis,” *Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies in London* 1 (1964): 275–98; Benjamin J. Gelles, *Peshat and Derash in the Exegesis of Rashi* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 1–27; Sarah Kamin, *Rashi: peshuto shel miqra’ u-midrasho shel miqra’* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 25–56; David Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 54–76; and Moshe M. Ahrend, “Le-veirur ha-musag ‘Peshuto She-la-miqra’,” in *Ha-Miqra’ bi-re’i mefarshav. Sefer zikaron le-Sarah Kamin*, ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), 237–61.
28. For a survey of early Jewish commentators in the Islamic world, see Abraham Halkin, “Ha-parshanut ha-yehudit ba-‘aravit huẓ le-sefarad ve-ha-parshanut ha-qara’it ha-qedumah,” in *Parshanut ha-miqra’ ha-yehudit: Pirqei mavo’*, ed. Moshe Greenberg, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1992), 15–28. See also Uriel Simon, “Parshanut ha-miqra’ ‘al derekh ha-peshaṭ: ha-askolah ha-sefaradit,” in *Moreshet Sepharad*, ed. Haim Beinart (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 115–36. About possible Islamic influence, see also Rina Drory, *Reshit ha-Magga’im shel ha-sifrut ha-yehudit ‘im ha-sifrut ha-‘aravit ba-me’ah ha-‘asirit*, ed. Itamar Even-Zohar (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1988).
29. There is vast literature on Rashi’s commentaries. For bibliographical references, see the following notes and Avraham Grossman and Sara Japhet, eds., *Rashi: Demuto vi-yzirato*. 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2008).
30. As to the first possibility, see Eran Viesel, “Ha-Perush ha-anonimi le-sefer divrei ha-yamim ha-meyuḥas le-talmid shel Rasag: meqomo be-toledot parshanut ha-peshaṭ ha-yehudit,” *Tarbiz* 76, no. 3–4 (2007): 415–34; and Mordechai Z. Cohen, “Maqor Seфарadi eḥshari le-musag peshuto shel miqra’ ezel Rashi,” in *Rashi: Demuto vi-yzirato*, ed. Avraham Grossman and Sara Japhet, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2008), 2:353–80. For evidence of Christian influence, see Elazar Touitou, and also Sarah Kamin, “Affinities between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in Twelfth-Century Northern France,” in Sarah Kamin, *Bein yehudim le-nozrim be-farshanut ha-miqra’*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008), xxi–xxxv.
31. Modern scholarship has already established that the majority of Rashi’s commentaries were adaptations of midrashic passages. See Nechama Leibowitz and Moshe M. Ahrend, *Perush Rashi la-Torah: ‘iyyunim be-shiṭato*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: The Open University of Israel, 1990), 2:331–492; and also Avraham Grossman, *Rashi* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2006), 85–97. For a compilation of his midrashic sources, see Menachem Zohari, *Meqorot Rashi*, 16 vols. (Jerusalem: Kana, 1986–94).
32. See the debate over Sarah Kamin’s path-breaking study of Rashi and his concept of *peshaṭ* in Mordechai Z. Cohen, “Hirhurim ‘al heqer ha-munaḥ ‘peshuto shel miqra’ bi-tehilat ha-me’ah ha-‘esrim ve-aḥat,” in *‘Le-yashev peshuto shel Miqra’*. *Asufat mehqarim be-farshanut ha-miqra’*, ed. Sara Japhet and Eran Viesel (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, 2011), 5–58 at 18–35.
33. According to Rashi’s grandson, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (the Rashbam), even Rashi himself admitted in old age that if he had written his *peshaṭ* commentaries again, he would have done it differently. See Touitou, *Ha-Peshaṭot*, 68–76.
34. On the concept of *peshaṭ* in the “Babylonian-Sephardic school,” see Avraham Grossman, “Biblical Exegesis in Spain during the 13th–15th Centuries,” in *Moreshet Sepharad*, ed. Haim Beinart (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 137–46. See also Mordechai Cohen, “Hirhurim,” 35–56.

35. In the introduction to his commentaries, Ibn Ezra described this method as the “fifth way.” See also Simon, “Parshanut ha-miqra’,” 104–10; and Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), ch. 5.
36. He refers to this as the “fourth way.”
37. Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Śafah bēruḥah: La lengua escogida*, ed. Enrique Ruiz González and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Córdoba: Ediciones el Almendro, 2004), 4. See also Simon, “Parshanut ha-miqra’,” 104–8; and Yeshayahu Maori, “‘Al mashma’ut ha-munaḥ ‘divrei yaḥid’ be-ferush Ra’ba’ la-miqra’. Le-yehaso shel Ra’ba’ le-midrashai ḥazal,” *Shnaton* 13 (2002): 201–46.
38. Aharon Mondshine, “‘Ve-ein be-sifro pashaṭ raq eḥad minei elef.’ Le-derekh ha-hityaḥasut shel Ra’ba’ le-feirush Rashi la-Torah,” in *Iyyunei miqra’ u-farshanut* 5, ed. Moshe Garsiel, Shmuel Vargon, Amos Frisch, and Jacob Kugel (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2000), 221–48.
39. For a general introduction and further bibliography, see Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, Raphael Jospe, and Dov Schwartz, “Maimonidean Controversy,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., 22 vols., ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 13:371–81.
40. This division was already noticed in Judah Rosenthal, “Rashi ve-ha-Ramban be-ha’arakhat ha-dorot,” in *Meḥqarim u-meqorot*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1967), 1:117–23. See more on this subject and a detailed bibliography in Tamás Visi, “Ibn Ezra, a Maimonidean Authority: The Evidence of the Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” in *The Culture of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought*, ed. James T. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 89–132.
41. Haim Dov Chavel, *Rabbenu Moshe ben Nahman: Toledot ḥayyav, zemano, ve-ḥibburav*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1973).
42. See Moshe Halbertal, *‘Al derekh ha-emet: ha-Ramban vi-yẓiratah shel masoret* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2006); and Haviva Pedaya, *Ha-Ramban: hit’allut: zeman maḥazori ve-teqst qadosh* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2008).
43. For general introductions to the commentary of Nahmanides and its versatility, see Grossman, “Biblical Exegesis”; and Yaakov Elman, “Moses ben Nahman/Nahmanides (Ramban),” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbo (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 416–32.
44. Bernard Septimus, “‘Open Rebuke and Concealed Love’: Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition,” in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (RAMBAN): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 11–34. Septimus argued that the widely accepted image of Nahmanides as an antirationalist and an anti-Maimonidean has blurred much of the complexity and subtle features of his unique thought that fused divergent traditions.
45. This is according to the famous position he expressed in the public dispute of Barcelona. Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 142–57.
46. Septimus, “Open Rebuke,” 16n21; for Nahmanides’s criticism of Ibn Ezra, see Miriam Sklarz, “Ha-leshonot ‘shabesh’ ve-‘pitah’ be-tokhaḥto shel Ramban le-Ra’ba’,” *Iyyunei Miqra’ u-farshanut* 8 (2008): 533–71.

47. Haim Dov Chavel, “Yaḥas ha-Ramban le-feirush Rashi ‘al ha-Torah,” in *Rashi: His Teachings and Personality=Rashi: Torato ve-ishiyuto*, ed. Simon Federbush (New York: The Cultural Department of the World Jewish Congress and the Torah Culture Department of the Jewish Agency, 1958), 207–18; Yehudah Kuperman, “Tokheḥa megulah ve-ahavah nisteret,” *Ha-Ma‘ayan* 13, no. 2.3 (1973): 13–26 at 13–15; and Ezra Zion Melamed, *Mefarshei ha-miqra’. Darkeihem ve-shiṭotehem* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 989–96. These scholars have addressed Nahmanides’s disagreements with Rashi, yet unlike Septimus, they did not interpret them as a sign of systematic or categorical criticism of Rashi’s *peshat*. Martin Lockshin recently noted that approximately one hundred of Nahmanides’s *peshat* explanations were intended to dismiss those of Rashi. “Peshat in the Torah Commentary of Moses ben Nahman (Ramban)” (paper presented at the international conference “Seventy Faces of the Torah,” Haifa, University of Haifa, May 24, 2011).
48. On Rashi’s reception in the Sephardic world, see Abraham Gross, “Rashi u-masoret limmud ha-torah she-biktav bi-sefarad,” in *Rashi: ‘Iyyunim bi-yizirato*, ed. Zvi Arié Steinfeld (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1993), 27–55; and the reservations of Eric Lawee, “The Reception of Rashi’s Commentary on the Torah in Spain: The Case of Adam’s Mating with the Animals,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, no. 1 (2007): 33–66.
49. See Gross, “Rashi,” 42.
50. Benzion Netanyahu, *The Marranos of Spain from the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 224–35; Israel M. Ta-Shma, “Heikhan Nithaber Sefer ‘Alilot Devarim?” *‘Aleī Sefer* 3 (1977): 44–53; and Reuven Bonfil, “Sefer ‘Alilot Devarim: Pereq be-toledot he-hagut ha-yehudit be-me’ah ha-14,” *Eshel Beer-Sheva* 2 (1980): 229–64.
51. Published in *Ozar Nechmad* 4 (1864), 177–95; 182; also quoted in Rosenthal, “Rashi,” 120; and Gross, “Rashi,” 36.
52. In a discussion of the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53, Pablo rejected Rashi’s view and noted that he is known in all the Jewish schools as a commentator of the Talmud, while his exegetical authority is disregarded “sicut antique Talmudici, quorum unus de expositoribus fuit Rabi Sal. prout est manifestum et notorium in omnibus scholis Iudaeorum. Unde aliqui magis moderni quam Rabi Sal. dimissa falsa sui expositionem in hoc loco.” *Scrutinium scripturarum* (Strasbourg: Johannes Mentelin, c. 1470), 1.5.7.
53. For Duran and his relations with Pablo, see Baer, *Toledot*, 314–18; the introduction in Frank Ephraim Talmage in Profiat Duran, *Kitvei Pulmus li-Profyat Duran*, ed. Frank Talmage (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center and Dinur Center, 1981); Netanyahu, *The Marranos*, 221–24; Eleazar Gutwirth, “Religion and Social Criticism in Late Medieval Rousillon: An Aspect of Profayt Duran’s Activities,” *Michael* 12 (1991): 137–40; Yisraeli, “*Converso* Jewishness”; and see further bibliography on Duran in Maud Natasha Kozodoy, *A Study of the Life and Works of Profiat Duran* (PhD Diss., Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2006), Chapter 1.
54. Profiat Duran, *Maase Efod: Einleitung in das Studium und Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache von Profiat Duran*, ed. Jonathan Friedländer and Jakob Kohn (Wien: J. Holzwarth, 1865), 41, quoted also in Gross, “Rashi,” 44.
55. Profiat Duran, *Maase*, 17; and Gross, “Rashi,” 44–45.
56. Concerning Duran’s affiliation with the Sephardic exegetical legacy, see Meira Polliak, “The Spanish Legacy in the Hebrew Bible Commentaries of Abraham Ibn Ezra and Pro-

- fyat Duran,” in *Encuentros and Desencuentros: Spanish Jewish Cultural Interaction Throughout History*, ed. Carlos Carrete Parrondo, Marcelo Dascal, Francisco Márquez Villanueva and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2000), 83–103.
57. Lawee, “Rashi’s Commentary,” 65–66.
 58. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei ha-Torah le-Rabenu Moshe ben Naḥman (Ramban)*, ed. Ch. D. Chavel, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1959), on Genesis 8:4.
 59. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 33, 7.
 60. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei ha-Torah*, on Genesis 8:4.
 61. On several occasions Pablo did directly link Rashi’s commentaries to Talmudic fables. See for example the *additio* to II Samuel 11.
 62. See recently about the ambivalence toward the literal meaning of scripture in pro-*converso* apologetics, including the *Scrutinium scripturarum* of Pablo de Santa María, in Claude B. Stuczynski, “Pro-*Converso* Apologetics and Biblical Exegesis,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Decker and Arturo Prats (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 151–75.

9. *Jewish and Christian Interpretations in Arragel’s Biblical Glosses* Ángel Sáenz-Badillos

1. As Fray Arias said: “mas a fin de saber e veer e se enformar enla biblia de glosas delos vuestros doctores modernos los que non alcanço nin vido Niculao de Lyra, que en quanto toca alos puntos e glosas que segund la Egleja Romana se deuen tener e escreuir e poner, yo dello por seruicio del dicho señor vos yo dare registro de todo ello.” Fols. 11vb–12ra. For a complete facsimile of the manuscript, see Moses Arragel, *La Biblia de Alba. An Illustrated Manuscript Bible in Castilian*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (companion volume) ed. J. Schonfield (Madrid: Fundación Amigos de Sefarad and London: Facsimile Editions, 1992).
2. In the gloss to Jeremiah 31:15, he mentions, “los registros que dados me fueron por los dichos señores que me enformaron en esta obra en las opiñones rromanas.” Fol. 306vb.
3. On the Bible of Moses Arragel in the context of other Romance Bible translations, see Gemma Avenzoa, *Biblias castellanas medievales* (San Millán de la Cogolla: CiLengua, 2011); Gemma Avenzoa and Andrés Enrique-Arias, “Bibliografía sobre las biblias romanceadas castellanas medievales,” *Boletín bibliográfico de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval. Cuaderno bibliográfico* 28 (2005): 411–51; Sonia Fellous, *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel: Quand un rabbin interprète la Bible pour les chrétiens* (Paris: Somogy Éditions, 2001); and Francisco Javier Pueyo Mena, “Biblias romanceadas y en ladino,” in *Sefardíes: Literatura y lengua de una nación dispersa*, ed. Elena Romero (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008), 193–263.
4. Gloss to Genesis 19:27, fol. 38rb; to 21:9, fol. 39ra.
5. On Genesis 22:2, fol. 39vb.
6. On Genesis 27:29, fol. 43rb. On Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, see Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), Chapter 5.
7. On Exodus 3:2, fol. 60rb.
8. For example, in commenting on Genesis 25:2, he states about Jerome: “Los nombres que los puso non se donde le vinieron.” Fol. 41va. There are also many discrepancies with Jerome in Arragel’s translation of Hebrew terms.

9. On Genesis 37:15, fol. 49va.
10. For instance, in the gloss to Ezekiel 36:25 he says: “E ya deximos que el costante en su ley deue creer e tener todo aquello que la su [santa] madre egleja tiene e cree, e non se inclynar a relacion de opiñon. E toda la mas glosa desta biblia, en los mas logares que son peligrosos, se faze asy, relatar opiñones, que esto es lo que por ti, muy alto Señor, me fue mandado enesta biblia, lo qual asy fize e relate opiñones a fin de relatar, non de examinar, que el examen ya deximos enel prohemio deste libro, conuiene a saber, enel prohemio de la Biblia, que el examen pertenesçe a los señores reales maestros en la santa theologia, e creer lo que cree la su santa madre egleja, segund que esto muy muchas vezes dicho tenemos e amonestado e çitado.” Fol. 339va. This same tone appears in different places, such as at the end of the gloss to Song of Songs: “E sienpre fue dicho que lo que se escriue en toda esta Biblia es puesto sso corrigimiento de los non omnes, mas diuinos señores maestros en la santa theologia, padres spirituales, que sy algund bien ende es, ellos fizieron la inuencion dello, e sy faltas ende algunas son puestas, non se pusieron por afirmatiuas opiñones, mas mençionando e diziendo opiñones en que algunos toparon. Iten, dixemos que sienpre se deuen tener las opiñones que son conformes con los articulos de la santa fe catolica, e desechar e reprehender los que contra ella fueren.” Fol. 382va.
11. “Muchos preguntan, sy Adam peco, el su semen ¿que culpa ouo? Esto responder conuiene a los honorables señores enla santa theologia maestros, e entretanto al su corregimiento me someto sy algo en ello fablare adelante.” Fol. 29rb, with a mark (cross) in the margin.
12. “Infinidas e diuisas glosas, muy alto Señor, se fazen eneste passo”; “E, Señor, qualquier destas opiñones e todas, pueden muy bien estar.” Fol. 75ra.
13. Fol. 124ra–vb.
14. “*E alço Rrabeca sus ojos e vio a Ysach e dexose caer del camello. Violo feroso e lleno de gracia de Dios, e de verguença del, dexose caer del camello. Algunos judios dizen que en cayendo en tierra Rrabeca, que perdiera la su virginidad que se le cayo en suelo, e que viniera vn cieruo e vna paloma a le cobrir aquella sangre, e que por tanto ouieron en gualardon las aues e las rrees canpiñas que quando las deguellan mando la ley que cubriesen su sangre dellas. E este tal dezir fue manera de sermonista, e tal, que avn el judio non lo cree. E el rrary que lo dixo su entencion fue por figura, e non afin de ser asy al pie dela letra.*” Fol. 41rb.
15. Fol. 44ra.
16. “Otros dizen que esto dizia por la venida del Mexias quel mundo a saluar auia, que auia de su generacion de naser, pero que lo veyra venir a grand vagar, conuiene saber: fasta que la Virgen conçibiese.” Fol. 48vb.
17. From fol. 124vb to 125rb.
18. “Non matauan las serpientes, mas los pecados.” Fol. 124vb.
19. “Reuelando muy grande secreto en la fe, e en commo la muerte e passion de Ihesu Christo fue a fin de perdonar el oreginal pecado.” Fol. 125rb.
20. “Dizen los latinos por qual razon la israelita nascion nos blesphaman a los de la rromana fe que en los nuestros templos e eglejas pongamos ymages de apostoles e de euangelistas e de los otros santos e santas e de los martires, los quales muerte e passyon rescibieron por sostener la fe de Ihesu Christo.” Fol. 125rb.

21. "Todos quantos logares sant Jeronimo rromanço infierno, los judios romançan fuessa o sepulchro." Fol. 53rb.
22. "*Que muera con mala postremeria.* Sant Geronimo rromanço e dixo: e faredes descender mis canas al infierno. Onde notan de aqui que los patriarcas yuan al infierno fasta que Ihesu cristo quebranto los infiernos e los saco dende, segund que ya te dixte ante desto, que fuessa e infierno quasy por non de anima minçion fazer vno ser." Fol. 54rb.
23. "E todo fiel cristiano deue creer lo que la su santa madre egleja cree, conviene saber, que este Malchiçedech, pues su intrepetaçion es rrey de justiçia, que significa el auenimiento de Jesucristo que es verdadero rrey de justiçia." Fol. 36rb.
24. "Todo el misterio e ofiçio dela ley vieja fue cambiado por el ofiçio del santo cuerpo de Dios, que asi en su carne commo en su sangre." Fol. 36rb.
25. "E pues quel pan se torno carne e el vino sangre, por esta significança fue la ofrenda de Malchiçedeque pan e vino, quel cuerpo de este rrey de justiçia auia de ser consagrado en pan e en vino, e la bendiçion que fisiera, que de notar es que significa la bendiçion que vsa dar el preste ala ora del ofiçio e alçar el cuerpo de Dios. E lo que dixo, Dios alto, esto es quando alça el abad el calis con el cuerpo de Dios. E lo que dixo: saco pan e vino, avn que sea segund la costruyçion del judio, es quel calis esta en el altar e el preste lo saca arriba alta mente. E lo que dixo, que le auia bendesido a Dios alto que crio çielos y tierra, en dezir çielos, significa altura quando el cuerpo de Dios se alça, e en desir tierra significa cosa baxa, e es al tornnar el preste el calis al altar, que a comparaçion dela alça que le fiso, es agora ya baxo, significança de omilldança e mansedat que en Ihesu ouo quando rresçibio muerte passion por el humanal linaje saluar." Fol. 36rb.
26. "O quantos montones de palabras espierenden ese Rrabi Salamon e Maestre de Girona e los Rrabot e Tanhuma e quantos doctores judios e cristianos son, e avn el famoso Niculao de Lira, proponiendo que por dezir el testo: *ataleo su muger en pos del, e tornose monton de sal*, que quiere dezir que su muger de Lot se torno monton de sal. E algunos dizen quel tornar monton de sal, torna ala tierra en general, e non ala muger de Loth e non a al, segund que testimonio Moysen, e dixo asy: sufre e sal quemio toda su tierra de Sodoma." Fol 38rb.
27. "Eneste dezir es gran diuision en el entendimiento del entre los Cristianos e los Judios, e prolixo tienpo e escriptura era nesçesario para determinar entrellos; pero pues que la voluntad del señor muy alto don Luys de Guzman, maestre dela caualleria de Calatraua, es de mandar aqui escreuir las opiniones dela ley cerca delos Judios e Cristianos, lo qual fizo bien el famoso Niculao de Lyra, siguiendo su camino commo fasta aqui es fecho, e asy pornemos aqui en plaça anbas opiniones: cristiana e judayca. La determinaçion quede a los señores theologos defensores dela ley." Fol. 57va.
28. "Que por aqui se prueua el Mexias ser venido, el qual fue Ihesu cristo . . . la venida del Mexias e el santo benefiçio." Fol. 57vab.
29. "Que le seguro aqui Jacob a Juda la preheminiçia e prinçipalidad fasta que viniese el rrey David." Fol. 57vb.
30. "Asy que oido as opiñon delos latinos muy plenaria mente, muy alto señor, e al tal has oydo las opiñones ebraycas sobre este passo, e ya dixte en el prohemia que cada vno deue ser fixo en los fundamentos e articulos de su fe." Fol. 58ra.
31. "E, muy alto Señor, aqui conuiene de notar que en la glosa deste ofiçio del carnero de la Pasqua es infinida diuision entre los glosadores ebreos e latinos; que los latinos

apropian este cordero que fue significança de la muerte e passion de Ihesu Christo que rescibió por el humanal lynaje saluar del pecado del primero omne, e que la sangre del cordero fue semejança a la sangre de Ihesu quando lo mataron, e que asy commo veyendo Israhel la dicha sangre eran librados de la pestilencia egipçiana, bien asy la nasçion humana en los christianos sson librados de la pestilencia infernal causada por el primero omne, e non van a los infiernos, e avn que muy breue, pero commo que esta es la vulgar christiana intençion eneste passo. Pero, muy alto Señor, los ebreos muy espresa mente niegan todo esto e ponen lo que dicho auemos, que el carnero fue en signa que Arias el signo era el dios de los egipçianos, e qualquier que mataua carnero o su lynaje, matauanlo commo aquel que vituperaua e blesphamaua al su dios; e mando el Señor degollar el su dios, mostrando que los egipçianos non auerian poder de se vengar de Israhel; e el vntar las puertas por de fuera con la sangre, fue de parte de los mas ensañar e que viesen la poca violencia dellos e del su dios.” Fol. 66vab.

32. “Ee a los omnes, en lo mas posible, de omnes angeles fazer.” Fols. 88ra and ff.
33. “Los christianos lo toman figuratiua mente a que el omne non faga obras de puerco.” Fol. 95vb.
34. Gloss to Deuteronomy 13:1: “E, señor, por dicho tienen en la fe rromana, e segund ley del euangelio, que los mandamientos dela ley son sempiternos; pero la diuisyon es entre los latinos e ebreos en el entender el sygnificado delos mandamientos, de guisa que latinos e ebreos se conuerdan en la fixunbre e eternidad dela santa ley.” Fol. 147va.
35. Gloss to Deuteronomy 27:25: “E ya dixere que la diuisyon es entre los latinos e ebrayquistas en el entender la ley, que quanto en sy misma, muy fixa, muy sempiterna es, tanto quanto durare el dador e ponedor de ella, que es el rey delos çielos e Dios verdadero. E desto asaz vezes auemos fablado e avn, a Dios plaziendo, fablaremos; pero avn aqui conuiene de notar que echo maldición a quien non fiziere e mantouiere la ley, quasy diga que non habunda a los omnes saber los sygnificados delos mandamientos, mas que los ponga en execucion. E ya desto e commo se entiende a mas a dos leyes lo remetimos a los señores maestros en theologia que saben determinar commo.” Fol. 155rb.
36. “Otros son que toman el non comer de la sangre figuratiua mente, conuiene saber: que non fagan a sus proximos malas obras, nin los engañen nin maten, pero, commo dicho auemos, sienpre los judios lo entienden e toman palpativa e material mente a que jamas ninguna sangre non pueden, segund este capitulo, comer.” Fol 100rb.
37. For instance, on Leviticus 5:17: “E fiziere vno de todos los mandamientos, etc. Toda la intençion deste parrafo es que sy alguno fiziere por obra alguno de los mandamientos negatiuos ymaginando ser de los afirmatiuos, verbi gracia: en los judios; vn judio tenia ante sy dos enxundias, vna de vna vaca e otra de puerco, e segund ley, la enxundia de vaca podia comer e non de la del puerco; por en vision semejar, trasmudosele la vna por la otra, e comio de aquella que era del puerco, e despues de comido, virificose bien la razon e que comio de lo a el defendido; verbi gracia: en los christianos vn santchristian tenia ostias en su casa o qualquier otro lugar en dos eguales buxetas: vnas consagradas e otras por consagrar. Dio a sus hijos de las consagradas, ymaginando que dio de las por consagrar; despues virificosele que dio de las hostias consagradas; dize agora el testo que sastifaze con el sacrefiçion en el testo en esta razon puesto. Ya sea que oy dia otros remedios e penas tiene la egleja en el yerro que se yerro en razon de las hostias, que aqui non lo posymos, saluo amana de ensienplo.” Fol. 91vb.

38. “E para esta venida del Mexias dio estas señas: que guiaria [nasceria] e yria vna estrella de Jacob, e leuantarse ha la verga de Israel, e derrocara los condes de Moab e derrocara todos los fijos de Seth. En la glosa de este dezir es diuision, que los ebrayquistas dizen seer esto por Dauid, que el fue el que fizo matança grande en los de Moab, asegund lo que se falla en los Reyes, e esto llamo estrella. Dixo mas: *leuantarse ha vna verga de Israel*. Esto dizen ser dicho por el Mexias. E los latinis dizen que esto se entiende en razon de la estrella que parescio e guio a los tres reyes magos en tienpo del rey Erodas, que les enseño do nascio Ihesu Christo en Bethlehem. E dixo que el Mexias derrocara todos los fijos de Seth, es de saber, que todo el mundo tiene de seer conuertido a la ley e doctrina del Mexias. Iten, que vençera los maluados de la opinion del malo Ante Christo. E el testo va contando la grande destruyçion que el Ante Christo tiene de fazer en todas las nasçiones del mundo.” Fol. 127vb.
39. “E, muy alto señor Maestre, aqui conuiene de notar seer infinida diuision entre los judios e los cristianos, que los cristianos tienen quel Mexias auia de seer dios e omne, e los judios dizen que non tiene de seer saluo puro omne, e que avn lo esperan, nin menos entienden quel Mexias saluase las almas del oreginal pecado.” Fol. 50rb. See also fol. 58vab.
40. “Para lo qual de nesçesario, el nuestro Señor Dios quiso estableçer vn dia en el qual todos los pecados fuesen perdonados, bien commo oy dia asy commo los judios tienen este dicho dia, tiene la egleja el viernes de la passyon de Ihesu Christo.” Fol. 99va.
41. “EL SABADO: del çelebrar e guardar el sabado o domingo segund los latinis, a los judios se ganan dos vtilidades, e a los christianos tres, e las dos son comunes a las dos nasçiones, e la terçera es a los christianos syngularissima.” The third benefit for Christians is the memory of the Resurrection. Fol. 103vb.
42. “E aqui pretesto para en toda esta glosa que non toco, nin Dios el quiera, en desbaratar nin contra dezir la trinidad; mas fablo en quanto a hablar ser vno el verdadero Dios, que es muy nesçesario en la fe, e es vn pilar que sobrel se armaran treze fundamentos por la via que se proçedera. E el hablar en la trinidad quede a los reuerendos angelicales maestros en la santa theologia.” Fol. 143ra.
43. “La ygleja romana toma de aqui [tiene] el caymiento de los angeles e de Luçifer, e algunos ebreos sson en esta misma opinion e algunos non.” Fol. 270va.
44. The introductory words are “Nota que dezir pudiera aqui.” Fol. 27rb.
45. This alludes to a translation different from that of Arragel.
46. This is introduced by these words: “significo lo que en el mundo auia de seer e de contesçer, e la ley nueva e vieja e el Mexias, e commo todas las leyes han una de seer.” Fol. 27rb.
47. “Fasta el templo segundo 172 años, e en el tienpo aqueste el templo durante segundo, el Mexias nascio, con que lux e estrellas al mundo fue e la ley cunplio, e el oreginal pecado por el perdonado fue.” Fol. 27va.
48. “En el quinto millar que 172 años despues dela dixtruyçion del segundo templo, estonçe ouo muchos enperadores e regiones que mucho perseguian a los de Christo discipulos e en el creyentes, e fazia dellos commo pesçes, queriendolos caçar si pudieran, lo qual bien manifesto fue en tiempo de Nero, enperador de Roma, e otros que mucho persigian, sus redes echando, e quien de Christo curase pocos e persegidos eran, fasta tanto que martires por su amor murieron . . . En el sexto millar del criamiento, las

- bestias fieras vernan; por capitan la fuerte serpiente traerán . . . el ante Cristo con las sus huestes que por el mundo se extenderan, en tentación el mundo poniendo . . . el Cristo e Elias con todos los santos paresçeran, e al ante cristo con sus huestes dix-truyran e mataran.” Fol. 27va.
49. “E diuision de leyes non auera.” Fol. 27va.
50. “Guardalo, que syn dubda secreto es.” Fol. 27va.
51. “Otros dizen que la tierra sobre que Adam formado fue, tomada fue del logar do el altar del templo fue edificado, por que perdonado fuese; e el que esta opinion ouo bien paresçe que non sopo commo el pecado de Adam otra mente auia de seer perdonado, conuiene saber, con la sangre e passion del Cristo.” Fol. 27va.
52. “Deuedes sauer que vno delos fundamentos dela ffe es que Adam a muerte condepnado por el pecado dela comida del arbol el e su generacion fue . . . ca syn dubda por aquel pecado la esperma dañada fue, e aquella damnificacion enla su generacion por sienpre quedo, e todos ellos por el pecado de Adam mueren.” Fol. 29rb.
53. “E acordo la su preuidencia quel su fijo Jhesu muerte e passion por el humanal linage saluar, e la su sangre que vertida fuese por los saluar.” “El que asy saluar podia, Dios e omne a seer auia en vno conjunta mente.” Fol. 29rb–29va.
54. Fols. 29rb and 29va.
55. “Aqui se falla nonbrado firmamiento sobre este rretajar treze vezes . . . , por tanto, saber deues que fueron treze firmamientos significança de Jeshu e doze apostoles, que son treze.” Fol. 37ra.
56. “Asy commo son en el çielo 12 signos e vna prima causa que los mueue, al tal fue enla tierra doze apostoles e Jeshu que los mouia e rreglaua, e avn el mismo les llamo algunas vezes a sus apostoles luzes e estrellas del mundo.” Fol. 37ra.
57. “Con todo deues, Señor, breue mente saber que, segund algunos de la egleja rromana dizen, que este exerçio significa esto que se sigue, conuiene a saber.” Fol. 123v.
58. “Pero, segund la opiñon latina, pues lo mas del testo del psalmo esta claro, solos quatro puntos o conclusiones conuiene aqui de notar, conuiene a saber.” Fol. 400ra.
59. “*Metioles en carçel tres dias*. Non mas los touo, por quanto ouo en reuelacion la resurreccion del Mexias al terçero dia.” Fol. 52vb.
60. “Signa era esto del bautismo que con el laurian de sus pecados.” Fol. 53va.
61. “*E alço su vos con llanto*. Por que sabia la muerte cruel del Cristo que padesceria.” Fol. 54rb.
62. “Adam, de nesçesario era de criado seer de cosas çelestiales e terrenales, conuiene saber: el cuerpo terenal, e la anima angelical, e esto asy quiso el soberano Dios por los fechos egualar, conuiene saber: que en el primero dia nuestro Señor crio los çielos e la tierra el dia segundo el firmamento delos çielos; el tercero dia que la tierra paresçiese; en el quarto crio sol e luna e estrellas, e esto es celestial; en el quinto las aguas anima biua fizieron, asy que pues en cada vn dia compartio el fazer, vno de çelestial e otro de terrenal en los dias dela semana, por el septimo non par seer en razon su curso, el bendito leuando, quiso considerar que en el vna cosa que çelestial e terenal fuese criar, el qual Adam fue anima suya celestial, cuerpo suyo terenal.” Fol. 27va.
63. “El vocablo ebrayco dize doze *naçiyim* engendrara. Este vocablo de *naçiyim* es equiuoco, que asy commo sufre rromañçe de princepes, sufre rromañçe de nuues, e que queria tanto dezir commo que estos princepes que se gastarian asy commo se gastan

las nuues, e an de ser conuertidos ala agua del bautismo, segun que se conuienten las nuues en agua.” Fol. 37rb.

64. “E al vno adoro, tres personas e vn solo Dios.” Fol. 37rb.
65. “*Dos gentes son en tu vientre*. Esto es prueua de gran preuidencia de nuestro señor Dios, quel propheta aquel sopiese en el vientre significar dos gentes, que tanto dezir quiso commo la diuision delas leyes, e este dezir lleua secreto.” Fol. 42ra.
66. “*E torno Ysach a cauar los pozos*. . . . Aqui faze mençion la ley de tres pozos. Aqui vn grand secreto de fe oyras: guardalo bien; que avn enla latina lengua sabe que pozos son vnos vocablos que se toman por figura . . . por consequençia estos pozos significan tres leyes: la primera, de natura; segunda, de escriptura; terçera, de gracia. Sobresta pyrmissa tornate, amigo, a aprender los nonbres delos pozos, conuien saber: quel primero de aquestos pozos ouo nonbre trabajo; el segundo pelea o malquista; el terçero, anpultura. . . . El terçero pozo ouo nonbre anplura. Esta es la ley de graçia que fue dada enla venida del Cristo, e es anpla syn ninguna carga nin trabajo destas obseruancias.” Fol. 42vb.
67. “E sabe quel cristiano es Israel, e asy lo testimonian los euangelios, mayor mente que por quanto el fijo dela virgen que era dela casa de Israhel, fazer a todo el mundo conuertir ala su santa fe sus casas las primeras . . . e asy fue que commo el fijo dela Virgen, esposa de Joseph, nascio, todos ala santa catolica fe se conuirtieron.” Fol. 44vb, 45ra.
68. “El desçender Jacob a Egipto fue signa ala gente de Israel del terçero catiuero dellos, el qual fue en poder delos rromanos, . . . Al tal auino a Israel, que eneste catiuero por la muerte de Cristo ellos mesmos causaron casy esta su catiuidat.” Fol. 56ra.
69. “Dos o mas vezes auemos dicho en que quando el pecador ponía su mano sobre el su sacrefiçio, confessaua, ally teniendola el pecado por que aquel sacrefiçio traya; e bien asy commo vn jarro de agua que se vazia e non del queda cosa, bien asy es que el dia que el pecado por boca del pecador es cofessado al sacerdote, non le remane cosa del.” Fol. 91rb.
70. “E dize mas el testo, que en tanta angustia Israhel serian, que bien cognoscerian que el mal que tienen es por se perder de ellos las santas e beatas perssonas, segund que mas lata mente esto se pone en la vida de los santos e en los actos e en la epistola de Sant Pablo.” Fol. 367ra.
71. Fol. 267vb.
72. In the gloss to Jeremiah 44:17, Arragel observes that, “El ebrayco dize: a la obra de los çielos, que quiere dezir toda la milicia de signos e planetas,” but both his version and the heading of the commentary have “reyna,” “queen.” Fol. 314ra. From the Romance versions, only E4 in El Escorial translates “obra.”
73. “Que Dios sabe que en los tiempos que esentos nos quedan del perseguimiento delos maluados moros, enemigos dela santa ffe catholica, o del seguimiento del pro e seruicio de nuestro señor el rrey e honor delos sus reynos, segund que conuiene ala nuestra orden, que nos mas querriamos dar en acuçia de oyr de biblia, a fin de con Dios contemplar, que yr a caça o oyr los libros ystoriales o poetas, o jugar axedres o tablas o sus semejantes juegos.” Fol. 2ra.
74. “En verdat, Raby Mose amigo, seria mejor que viniesedes enel cognosçimiento dela Santa Trinidad e la fe rromana, e alunbrasedes con verdat la vuestra anima commo se non perdiere en los infiernos, e cognosçiesedes el verdadero redemptor rey mexias Ihesu.” Fol. 11vb.

10. *Between Epic Entertainment and Polemical Exegesis:**Jesus as Antihero in Toledot Yeshu*

Alexandra Cuffel

1. Riccardo Di Segni, "Due nuovi fonti sullo Toledoth Jeshu," *Rassegna Mensile de Israel* 55, no. 1 (1989): 127–32; Riccardo Di Segni, *Il vangelo del ghetto* (Rome: Newton Compton, 1985); Riccardo Di Segni, "La tradizione testuale delle 'Toledoth Jéshu': manoscritti, edizioni a stampa, classificazione," *Rassegna Mensile de Israel* 50, nos. 1–4 (1984): 84–100; Samuel Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen* (Hildesheim: Görng Oms Verlag, 2002), 1–37. For indications of earlier Hebrew recensions, however, see Yaaqov Deutsch, "Eduyot 'al nosah qadam shel 'Toledot Yeshu,'" *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 177–97. For an overview of the literature and state of the research on this corpus, see Peter Schäfer's introduction to *Toledot Yeshu ("The Life Story of Jesus") Revisited*, ed. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 1–11.
2. Michael Sokoloff, "The Date and Provenance of the Aramaic *Toledot Yeshu* on the Basis of Aramaic Dialectology," in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 13–26; Pierluigi Piovaneli, "The *Toledot Yeshu* and Christian Apocryphal Literature: The Formative Years," in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 89–100; Peter Schäfer, "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*," in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 27–48; Michael Meerson, "Meaningful Nonsense: A Study of Details in *Toledot Yeshu*," in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 181–95; Willem F. Smelik, "The Aramaic Dialect(s) of the *Toledot Yeshu* Fragments," *Aramaic Studies* 7 (2009): 39–73; Ernst Bammel, "Eine übersehene Angabe zu den *Toledoth Jeschu*," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 479–80; Ernst Bammel, "Christian Origins in Jewish Tradition," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966–67): 317–35; Daniel Boyarin, "Qeri'ah metuqqenet shel ha-qeta'ac he-ḥadash shel 'Toledot Yeshu,'" *Tarbiz* 47 (1978): 249–52; Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, 1–8.
3. Most of these consist of comments by Agobard of Lyons, and the inclusion of a version of the *Toledot Yeshu* in Ramon Martí's *Pugio fidei*. Explorations of evidence of Jewish usage of the imagery and language of the *Toledot Yeshu* have been very scattered. See Ruth Mazo Karras, "The Aerial Battle in the *Toledot Yeshu* and Sodomy in the Late Middle Ages," *Medieval Encounters* 19 (2013): 493–533 (my thanks to Ruth Karras for allowing me to read her article before its publication); Schäfer, "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*" in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 27–48; Alexandra Cuffel, "The Matter of Others: Menstrual Blood and Uncontrolled Semen in Thirteenth-Century Kabbalists' Polemic against Christians, 'Bad' Jews, and Muslims," in *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe: Gender, Power, Patronage, and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom: Festschrift in honor of Penelope D. Johnson*, ed. Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 249–84; Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 82, 120, 129, 133; Moshe Idel, "Abraham Abulafia on the Jewish Messiah and Jesus," in *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 45–61; Anna Sapir Abulafia, "Invectives against Christianity in the Hebrew Chronicles of the First Crusade," in *Crusade and Settlement. Papers Read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of Crusades in the Latin East and Presented to R. C. Smail*, ed. Peter Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 66–77. On Ramon Martí and the *Pugio fidei*, see the discussion below.

4. Deutsch, “Eduyot.”
5. Miriam Goldstein, “Judeo-Arabic Versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*,” *Ginzei Qedem* 6 (2010): 9–42.
6. Miriam Goldstein is working on a monograph examining the Judeo-Arabic *Toledot Yeshu* texts. See also Philip S. Alexander, “The *Toledot Yeshu* in the Context of the Jewish-Muslim Debate,” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 137–58.
7. Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Penguin, 2004), 1–8, 42–62; Remke Kruk, “Back to the Boudoir: Arabic Versions of the *Sīrat al-amīr Ḥamza*, Warrior Princesses, and the *Sīra*’s Literary Unity,” *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 48 (1997): 129–48; Harry Norris’s introduction to *The Adventures of Sayf Ben Dhi Yazan: An Arab Folktale*, trans. and summarized by Lena Jayyusi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), ix–xix; M. C. Lyons, *The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-Telling*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), vol. 1; M. C. Lyons, “The Crusading Stratum in the Arabic Hero Cycles,” in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 147–61; Peter Heath, “Lord and Parry, *Sīrat ‘Antar*, Lions,” *Edebiyat* n.s. 2, nos. 1–2 (1988): 149–66; Wiebke Walther, “Das Bild der Frau in ‘Tausenduneiner Nacht,’” *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientalistik* 4 (1982): 69–91; Marius Canard, “Delhemma, épopée arabe des guerres arabo-byzantines,” *Byzantion* 10 (1935): 283–300; Marius Canard, “Les Expéditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l’histoire et dans la légende,” *Journal Asiatique* 208 (1926): 61–121.
8. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1999), 102–3, 230, 263–68, 273; Harry Norris, “Western Travellers and Arab Story-Tellers of the Nineteenth Century. The Adventures of Abū Zayd al-Hilālī and al-Zīr al-Sālīm as Told by Shaykh Abū Wundī of the ‘Awāzim of Jordan,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 9 (1991): 183–92; Dwight Reynolds, *Heroic Poetry, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); Jean-Patrick Guillaume, “Présentation,” in *Roman de Baïbars, Les enfances de Baïbars*, trans. and annotated Georges Rohas and Jean-Patrick Guillaume (Paris: Sindbad, 1985); Canard, “Delhemma.”
9. Irwin, *Arabian Nights*, 88–89; Remke Kruk, “Clipped Wings: Medieval Arabic Adaptations of the Amazon Myth,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1, no. 2 (1994): 132–51; V. Christides, “An Arabo-Byzantine Novel, ‘Umar b. al-Nu’man compared with Digenes Akritas,” *Byzantion: revue internationale des études byzantines* 32 (1962): 549–604.
10. Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra*/s et Histoire,” *Arabica* 51 (2004): 33–53; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 102–3, 230, 263–68, 273; Kruk, “Back to the Boudoir”; Lyons, “Crusading Stratum”; Norris, introduction to *The Adventures of Sayf Ben Dhi Yazan*; Norris, “Western Travellers and Arab Story-Tellers”; Canard, “Delhemma.”
11. Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 34–35, 54–56, 101–1, 158–96, 205–8. Other aspects of Muḥammad’s life are also retold in a polemical fashion: Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*, 30, 191–96; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 76–77, 134–36, 146; John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia

- University Press, 2002), 62, 92–93, 125, 140, 142, 150, 168, 181; John Tolan, “Un cadaver mutilé: Le déchirement polémique de Mahomet,” *Le Moyen Âge* 104 (1998): 53–72.
12. Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahîrâ*, 37–54.
 13. Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahîrâ* 190, 193, 196–99.
 14. David Berger, ed. and trans., *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), para. 227, Hebrew 152–53, English 217–18; Moses ben Maimon, *Epistle to Yemen*, ed. Abraham Halkin, trans. Boaz Cohen (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952), Section 4; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 134.
 15. Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*, 42–50, 54–64, 68–76, 80–83, 85–88, 93–102, 107–10, 114–17, 118–21, 123–27, 129–30, 131, 141–43, 146–49, 226–36; Adolf Jellinek, ed., *Beit ha-Midrash*, 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1967), pt. 6, ix–xii, 9–14, 153–56; John Gager, “Simon Peter, Founder of Christianity or Saviour of Israel?” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 221–45; and Galit Hasan-Rokem, “Polymorphic Helena—Toledot Yeshu as a Palimpsest of Religious Narratives and Identities,” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 247–82; Withold Witakowski, “Ethiopic and Hebrew Versions of the Legend of the Finding of the Holy Cross,” *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 527–35; Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktales: History, Genre, Meaning*, trans. Jacqueline Teitelbaum (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 306–8; Stephen Gero, “The Nestorius Legend in the *Toledoth Yeshu*,” *Oriens Christianus* 59 (1975): 108–20.
 16. Goldstein, “Judeo-Arabic Versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*.” Also see Goldstein, “Eli Yassif, *Toledot Yeshu*: Folk-Narrative as Polemics and Self Criticism,” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 101–35; Yassif, *Hebrew Folktales*, 303–8.
 17. Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahîrâ*, 32–34; Goldstein, “Judeo-Arabic Versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*”; David Biale, “Counter-History and Jewish Polemics against Christianity: The *Sefer Toldot Yeshu* and the *Sefer Zerubavel*.” *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 1 (1999): 130–45.
 18. Harvey Hames, “Reason and Faith: Inter-Religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the 13th Century,” in *Religious Apologetics—Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yossef Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 267–84; and Görg Hasselhoff, “Self-Definition, Apology and the Jew Moses Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas, Raymundus Martini, Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Lyra,” in Schwartz, *Religious Apologetics*, 285–316; Gilbert Dahan, ed., *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris 1242–1244* (Paris: Cerf, 1999); William Chester Jordan, “Marian Devotion and the Talmud Trial of 1240,” in *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewöhner (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 61–76; Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Robert Chazan, “The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered (1239–48),” in *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 55 (1988): 11–30; Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Invectives”; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), 57–99; Chen Merchavia, *Ha-Talmud bi-re’i ha-Nazrut: ha-yaḥas le-sifrut yisra’el she-le-ahar ha-miqra’ ba-‘olam ha-nozri bi-yme’i ha-beinayyim 500–1248* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1970), 227–48; Judah Rosenthal, “The Talmud on Trial: The Disputation of Paris in the Year 1240,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 47 (1956–57): 58–76, 145–169.

19. Schäfer, “Agobard’s and Amulo’s *Toledot Yeshu*” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 27–48; Paola Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, 1250–1391* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 121–24; Paola Tartakoff, “The *Toledot Yeshu* and the Jewish-Christian Conflict in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 297–309; Abulafia, “Investives.” More generally, Eli Yassif emphasizes the oral nature of all “folktales,” of which the *Toledot Yeshu* would be an example, throughout his book, *The Hebrew Folktales*.
20. Ramon Martí, *Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos* (Leipzig: Heirs of Friedrich Lankisch, at the press of Johann Wittigav’s Widow, 1687; Reprinted, Farnborough: Gregg, 1967). Most of Part 2 (259–478) of the *Pugio* addresses this theme in some way. Hasselhoff, “Self-Definition”; Hasselhoff, “Some Remarks on Raymond Martini’s (c. 1215/30–c. 1284/94) Use of Moses Maimonides,” *Trumah: Studien zum jüdische Mittelalter* 12 (2002): 133–48.
21. See, for example, Paris, Bibliothèque Ste.-Geneviève MS 1405, fols. 122–23.
22. Ste.-Geneviève MS 1405, fols. 124–25; Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 362–4, Secunda Pars. Cap. VIII.vi; Cambridge Genizah MS TS NS 298.57 and possibly St. Petersburg: National Library of Russia, MS Arabic 919 and St. Petersburg: National Library of Russia, MS Arabic 3014 and parts of MS Arabic 3005. See esp. 7r where Jesus goes to the Temple and learns the *shem ha-meforash*, the awesome (and forbidden) name of God. TS NS 298.49 also speaks of Jesus’s visitation to the Temple and his study of magic, although the latter had been a part of the *Toledot* tradition from its earliest independent recension. See the version given in Boyarin, “Qeri’ah.” My thanks to Görg Hasselhoff (Ruhr Universität Bochum, Germany) for sharing his work on this subject and a pdf of the microfilm of MS Ste.-Geneviève 1405. He along with Ryan Szpiech (Michigan), Ann Giletti (Rome), and Philippe Bobichon (Paris) are preparing a critical edition of the *Pugio fidei* as part of the series “Bibliotheca Philosophorum Medii Aevi Cataloniae,” published by Obrador Edèndum, Publicacions UAB, Publicacions URV, in Santa Coloma de Queralt.
23. Ryan Szpiech, “Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P. (d. after 1284)” in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Charles D. Wright and Karen Fresco (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 171–87. (My thanks to Ryan Szpiech for sharing this article with me before its publication); Ryan Szpiech, “Citas árabes en caracteres hebreos en el *Pugio Fidei* del dominico Ramón Martí: Entre la autenticidad y la autoridad,” *Al-Qanṭara* 32, no. 1 (2011): 71–107.
24. Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*, 121–24; Tartakoff, “The *Toledot Yeshu* and the Jewish-Christian Conflict.”
25. Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew*, 122.
26. Adnan Husain, “Conversion to History: Negating Exile and Messianism in al-Samaw’al al-Maghribi’s Polemic against Judaism.” *Medieval Encounters* 8, no. 1 (2001): 3–34.
27. Moses ben Maimon, *Mishnah ‘im Perush Rabbenu Moshe ben Maimon*, ed. and trans. J. Kapaḥ, 6 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1965), Sanhedrin X.1; Husain, “Conversion to History”; Salo Baron, “Historical Outlook of Maimonides,” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 6 (1935): 5–113.
28. For Judeo-Arabic manuscripts describing Jesus’s illegitimate conception from a menstruating woman, see Cambridge Genizah Manuscripts TS NS 298.57; TS NS 298.55;

- TS NS 298.49; TS NS 246.24; St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Arabic 3005. On Muslim laws regarding, attitudes toward, and polemical uses of menstruation, see: Sharon Faye Koren, *Forsaken: The Menstruant in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 127–43; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 75, 77–78, 147; Marion Holmes Katz, *Body of the Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1, 5, 8–11, 23, 49–50, 195–202; Kevin Reinhart, “Impurity/No Danger,” *History of Religions* 30 (1990): 1–24; Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur’an: Traditions and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 53–54, 60, 73–80.
29. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī al-radd ‘alā al-yahūd wa al-naṣārā*, ed. Sayf al-Dīn al-Kātib (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dār al-Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1980), 196; Heribert Busse, “Jesu Erretung vom Kreuz in der islamischen Koranexegese von Sura 4:157,” *Oriens* 36 (2001): 160–95, esp. 181, 183; Ḥava Lazarus Yafeh, “Some Neglected Aspects of Medieval Muslim Polemic against Christianity,” *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 1 (1996): 61–84.
30. Etan Kohlberg, “The Position of the *walad zina* in Imami Shi’ism,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48, no. 2 (1985): 237–66; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 74–75.
31. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 38, 50–51, 64, 89.
32. Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur’ān: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self Image* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press Inc., 1999), 11–35, 41–49, 55–61, 76–99, 108–9, 186–89, 213–50, 279–80; Steven Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 13–14, 47–48, 65–71, 85, 93–135.
33. Nu‘ayim ibn Ḥammad Khuzā‘ī, *Kitāb al-ḥitan* (Mecca: al-Maktaba al-Tijārīya, 1991), 333; Aḥmad ibn Ja‘afar ibn Muḥammad al-Munādī, *Al-Malāḥim*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-‘Uqaylī (Qum: Dār al-Sirah, 1998), 302.
34. Koren, *Forsaken*, 127–43.
35. Koren, *Forsaken*, 104–9, 120; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 100, 102–5, 191–95; Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 177–88; Horst Müller-Bütow, *Leprosy: Ein medizinhistorischer Überblick unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der mittelalterlichen arabischen Medizin*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe VII, Medizin. Abt. B, Geschichte der Medizin, 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981), 55–133; Michael Dols, “The Leper in Medieval Islamic Society,” *Speculum* 58 (1983): 891–916; Michael Dols, “Leprosy in Medieval Arabic Medicine,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 34 (1979): 314–33.
36. Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Farhad Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 152–53.
37. *The Finding of the True Cross: The Judas Kyriakos Legend in Syriac*, ed. and trans. Han J. W. Drijvers and Hendrik Jan Willem Drijvers, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 565, Subsidia 93 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997); Witakowski, “Ethiopic and Hebrew Versions”; Barbara Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in*

- Text and Image* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 23–32, 42–53; Jan Wilhelm Drijvers, “Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: Some New Reflections,” in *Millennium 8 Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.*, ed. Wolfram Brandes, Alexander Dermandt, Hartmut Leppin, Helmut Krasser, Peter von Möllendorff (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 125–74; Jan Wilhelm Drijvers, “The Protonike Legend, the Doctrine of Addai and the Bishop Rabbula of Edessa,” *Vigilae Christianae* 51, no. 3 (1997): 298–315; Jan Wilhelm Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of the Finding of the True Cross* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 79–125, 131–80; Stephan Shoemaker, “‘Let Us Go and Burn Her Body’: The Image of the Jew in Early Dormition Traditions,” *Church History*, 68, no. 4 (1999): 775–823; Stefan Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found: From Event to Medieval Legend* (Stockholm: Almqvist Wiksell, 1991), 149, 160–76, 201–3, 273–78. My thanks to Profs. Nikolas Jaspert of Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany, and Zara Pogossian of John Cabot University, Rome, Italy, for their bibliographic suggestions. *A Disputation over a Fragment of the Cross: A Medieval Arabic Text from the History of Christian-Jewish-Muslim Relations in Egypt*, ed. and trans. J. Davis, Bilal Orfali, and Samuel Nobel (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2012), 37–39, 81–82, has a very abbreviated version of the finding of the true cross; however, the presence of even an abbreviated version in this text testifies to the circulation of this story in Egypt among Arabic-speaking Christian communities, especially Copts.
38. Cambridge MS TS-NS 298–57 v. ll. 11–12. Also possibly St. Petersburg MS Arabic 919, 4r–v, and St. Petersburg MS Arabic 3014v. It is not clear to me whether the queen mentioned at the end of these last two manuscripts is intended to be Helen. Edited Hebrew versions and some translations of the Hebrew Helen story embedded within the *Toledot Yeshu* may be found in Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 42–50, 54–64 (Strasbourg: Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, MS 3974); 68–76, 80–83, 93–102, 107–10, 141–43 (MS Vindobona=Vienna: Israelitische Theologische Lehranstalt, MS Cod. Heb 54, now lost); 118–21, 123–27 (Yemen, private collection of E. Adler, MS copy of *Toledot Yeshu*, now lost); 129–30 (Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS OR 4802/3); 131 (“aus drei slavischen Mss”); 146–47, 148 (“Prüfstein” des Schemtob ibn Schaprut). Most of these versions also contain the story of Jesus’s illegitimate conception while Mary was menstruating, his disgrace, and his pursuit of magic, including Cambridge MS TS-NS 298–57 (MS Vienna, MS Leiden, and the “Prüfstein” as presented in Krauss do not). The regular pairing of this set of narrative developments raises the question of whether those Judeo-Arabic fragments that contain the story of Jesus’s conception and willful pursuit of magic and knowledge of God’s name also contained the Helene story in their complete form, which would mean that the tale was even more widespread among Jewish communities in the Islamic world than can be determined for certain based on the current state of the evidence.
39. Boyarin, “Qeri’ah metuqenet,” recto, l. 7, 250 (Aramaic), 252 (Hebrew translation); Deutsch has republished the Aramaic text originally published by Ginzberg, Horbury, and Falk. Deutsch, “Eduyot,” see esp. 194–95 where the relevant section of the Aramaic text may be found.
40. Deutsch, “Eduyot” (Evr. I 274), 194; l. 29:195–96, ll. 5 ff. (Compare with Aramaic version edited by Ginzberg, which Deutsch reprinted facing the Hebrew text). Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 46–47, 58–59 81–83, 107–9, 120–21, 126–27. In the Strasbourg and Yemen texts the

- name of the garden owner is not mentioned. The Vienna codex also contains a version of the tale, but with a twist (see below): Kraus *Leben Jesu*, 142–43.
41. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 41–42, 54, 69–70, 95–97, 118–19, 124.
 42. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 41–43, 54–56, 68–74, 93–100, 118–20, 123–25, 146–47, 148. In the Yemeni version, the one who renders Jesus impure and therefore defeats him in mid-flight is named Antiochi, not Judas (Krauss, 119, 125). Shemtob ibn Shaprut does not include the battle between Jesus and Judas or another chosen hero of the Jews. On the development of this topos in the *Toledot* tradition, see Karras, “Aerial battle.”
 43. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 43–44, 56–57, 74–78, 100–104, 120, 125–26.
 44. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 78–80, 104–7.
 45. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 44–46, 56–59, 79–83, 106–10, 120–21, 125–27.
 46. Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen in *Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller des ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, vol. 50 (Berlin: 1960), book 2, chap. 1.
 47. Martí, *Pugio fidei*, 364, Secunda Pars. Cap. VIII.viii.
 48. Drijvers, *The Finding of the True Cross*; Drijvers, “Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth”; Drijvers, “The Protonike Legend”; Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*, 159–65; S. Heid, “Zur frühen Protonike- und Kyriakoslegende,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 109 (1991): 73–108.
 49. On the place of origin and function of the true-cross legend, see Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 77–81, 148–49; Drijvers, “The Protonike Legend”; and Jean-Louis Feiertag, “À propos du rôle des juifs dans les traditions sous-jacentes au récits de l’invention de la croix,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 118 (2000): 241–65.
 50. Steven’s martyrdom was connected to the story of the finding of the true cross in other contexts as well. Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 146–48, 150–51, 156, 172.
 51. Drijvers, “The Protonike Legend.”
 52. Shoemaker, “Let Us Go and Burn Her Body”; Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*. Shoemaker and Drijvers indicate that the Dormition story originally existed in Greek and was translated into Syriac, although the Syriac version contains details about the *invenio crucis* that the others do not.
 53. Feiertag, “À propos du rôle des juifs”; Bordhammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 61, 70–71, 76, 146–48, 156–68.
 54. Deutsch, “Eduyot.” See especially 182, and then the beginning of the Hebrew texts on 185
 55. Deutsch, “Eduyot.”
 56. Sokoloff, “The Date and Provenance of the Aramaic *Toledot Yeshu*.”
 57. Deutsch, “Eduyot”; *Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*, ed. and trans. George Phillips (London: Trübner & Co. Ludgate Hill, 1876), 36–38.
 58. Deutsch, “Eduyot,” 191.
 59. Deutsch, “Eduyot,” 195, but for the entire segment see 194–95.
 60. Schäfer, “Agobard’s and Amulo’s *Toledot Yeshu*” in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 27–48.
 61. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta*; S. P. Brock, “Two Syriac Poems on the Invention of the Cross,” in *Lebendige Überlieferung. Festschrift für H.J. Vogt*, ed. N. el-Khoury, H. Crouzel, and R. Reinhardt (Beirut: Friederich-Ruckert Verlag and Ostfildern: Schwaben-Verlag, 1992), 55–82.
 62. *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, ed. Daniel J. Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, 1996), para. 134, 2:72 (Judeo-Arabic), 1:78, English translation. On the dating of the Judeo-Arabic texts, see *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*. 1:15–19

63. Lasker, *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 1:18. The surviving Hebrew manuscripts of the translation *Nestor ha-Komer*, which also contain this paragraph, are late as well. *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 1:27–28.
64. Lasker, *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 2:87–92.
65. Lasker, *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 1:19.
66. Lasker, *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, 1:162. See Lasker and Stroumsa's comments on paragraph 134.
67. Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 154–57, 258–63, 283–85, 290, 295–98. Note that Galit Hasan-Rokem makes a case for the Helene in the *Toledot Yeshu* narratives as being a conflation of Helene the mother of Constantine and Helene of Adiabene, the queen of Adiabene who converted to Judaism in around 30 CE and was well known for her donations to the Temple in Jerusalem. Hasan-Rokem, "Polymorphic Helena."
68. Krauss, *Leben Jesu*, 42–43, 55–56, 72, 96, 74–76, 100–102, 119, 125.
69. Jacobus de Voragine, *La Légende dorée*, 2 vols. ed. and trans. M. Roze (Paris: Flammarion, 1967), 1:341–49; *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols. trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 1:277–84.
70. Deutsch, "'Eduyot,'" especially 185–86; Boyarin, "Qeri'ah," especially 250, 252.
71. John 20:15; Schäfer, "Agobard's and Amulo's *Toledot Yeshu*" in Schäfer, *Toledot Yeshu*, 27–48.
72. John 18, Acts 1:18.
73. Nikolas Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem in the Latin West: Mediterranean Connections and Institutional Agency" forthcoming in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); Carla Heussler, *De cruce Christi: Kreuzauffindung und Kreuzerhöhung: Funktionswandel und Historisierung in nachtridentinischer Zeit* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006), 21–32, 69–89; Louis van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross: Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood*, 54–88. My thanks to Nikolas Jaspert for sharing his work with me before its publication.
74. Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem."
75. Jaspert, "The True Cross of Jerusalem"; Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood*, 80–126, 131–32; Barbara Baert, "New Observations on the Genesis of Girona (1050–1100). The Iconography of the Legend of the True Cross," *Gesta* 38, no. 2 (1999): 115–27.
76. De Voragine, *La Légende dorée*, 1:341–49; *Golden Legend*, 1:277–84; Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood*, 194–288. She notes that the motif became most popular in Northern Europe, but it was also well known in southern France, Italy, and Iberia.
77. *Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, para. 134, 2:107 (Hebrew), 1:124. The Hebrew does not include the invective against Helene's sexuality.
78. Martí does know of traditions connecting Jesus to Pantera, and Jesus claims that the sages of Israel call him a bastard because they wish authority over Israel. "dicunt sapientes me esse spurium quia super Israel volunt habere dominum." *Pugio fidei*, 363, Secunda Pars. Cap. IV.vi; Karras, "Aerial battle." He does not devote much space or polemical energy to this theme, however.
79. It is tempting to speculate that Ramon Martí knew *Nestor ha-Komer*, given the similarity between his and this text's polemical argumentation about Helene and the true cross; however, there is no clear evidence that he did.

80. Klaus Krönert, "Helena, das Kreuz Christi und die Juden: Anmerkungen zu zwei Predigten des Urkundenfälschers Berengosus von St. Maximin (vor 1107–1125), 'De laude et inventione sanctae crucis' und 'De mysterio ligni Domini,'" *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch* 45 (2005): 57–90 (my thanks to Prof. Nikolas Jaspert for this reference); Borgehammar, *How the Holy Cross Was Found*, 163–64; Amnon Linder, "Ecclesia and Synagoga in the Medieval Myth of Constantine the Great," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 54 (1976): 1019–60.
81. Szpiech, "Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration"; Szpiech, "Citas árabes"; Thomas Burman, *Reading the Qurʾān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009); Thomas Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Mikel de Epalza, "Antecedentes islamocristianos concretos de la traducción del Corán al Catalán," *Ilu. Revista de ciencias de las religiones* 8 (2003): 213–24; Polemic of Nestor the Priest, 1:27–32; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Marie Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, with Carol D. Lanham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 421–62; Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*; David Berger, "Gilbert Crispen, Alan of Lille and Jacob ben Reuben," *Speculum*, 49, no. 1 (1974): 34–47; Judah Rosenthal, "Targum shel ha-besorah 'al-pi Matai le-Ya'aqov ben Reuven," *Tarbiz* 32 (1962–63): 48–66; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978). However, see Vose's cautionary discussion regarding the translation and missionizing projects by the Dominicans: Robin Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims, and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
82. Shoemaker, "Let us go and burn her body." On anti-Jewish polemic in these areas, see for example Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 114–15, 118–31, 150–53, 219; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999); Denise L. Despres, "Mary of the Eucharist: Cultic Anti-Judaism in Some Fourteenth-Century English Devotional Manuscripts," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996), 375–401; Hedwig Rockelein, "Marie, l'église et la Synagogue: Culte de la Vierge et lutte contre les Juifs en Allemagne à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Marie: Le Culte de la Vierge dans la société médiéval*, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat, Eric Palazzo, and Daniel Russ (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996), 513–31; Peter Michael Spangenberg, "Judenfeindlichkeit in den altfranzösischen Marienmirakeln. Stereotypen oder Symptome der Veränderung der kollektiven Selbsterfahrung?" in *Die Legende vom Ritualmord: Zur Geschichte der Blutbeschuldigung gegen Juden*, ed. Rainer Erb, Dokumente, Texte, Materialien 6 (Berlin: Metropol-Verlag, 1993), 157–77; Robert Worth Frank Jr., "Miracles of the Virgin, Medieval Anti-Semitism, and the Prioress's Tale," in *The Wisdom of Poetry*, ed. Larry D. Benson and Siegfried Wenzel (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University Press, 1982), 177–88.
83. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 24–26, 28–29, 58–73; Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 107–10; Jaroslav

- Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–89), 1:28–32, 73, 2:37–90; Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 194–212.
84. Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 108–15, 117–37.
 85. Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), #224–28; Karras, “Aerial Battle”; Koren, *Forsaken*, 17–19, 22–27; Michael Swartz, “‘Like Ministering Angels’: Ritual and Purity in Early Jewish Mysticism and Magic,” *AJS Review* 19, no. 2 (1994): 135–67. As Koren demonstrates throughout the rest of her book, the values and fears placed upon purity and impurity, especially menstrual impurity, if anything became more prevalent in Jewish communities in Northern Europe and Iberia in the Middle Ages.
 86. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 110–66.
 87. Irven Resnick, *Marks of Distinction: Christian Perceptions of Jews in the High Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 70–72, 182, 188, 191, 201–5, 242, 321; Irven Resnick, “Medieval Roots of the Myth of Jewish Male Menses,” *Harvard Theological Review* 93, no. 3 (2000): 241–63; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols of the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient 1100–1450* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009), 148–54; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 156–82.
 88. Karras, in her analysis of this tradition, suggests that urination and a more vague “pollute” used in the Strasbourg edition may be the earliest version—more specific discussions of ejaculation may have come slightly later. Karras, “Aerial Battle.”
 89. Christopher Jones, “Monastic Identity and Sodomite Danger in the Occupatio of Odo of Cluny,” *Speculum* 82, no. 1 (2007): 1–53; William Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Law and Nonmarital Sex in the Middle Ages,” in *Conflict in Medieval Europe: Changing Perspectives on Society and Culture*, ed. Warren C. Brown and Piotr Górecki (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 175–98, esp. 188–89; Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities Pre- and Post-Modern* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press: 1999), 55–99; Dyan Elliot, “Pollution, Illusion, and Masculine Disarray: Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of the Clergy,” in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1–23; John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 269–303. More broadly on attitudes and uses of same-sex, especially male same-sex relations and accusations, see Josiah Blackmore and Gregory S. Hutcheson, eds. *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).
 90. On sodomy, ejaculation, and urination in the aerial battle in the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition in the context of growing late medieval and early modern Christian discourse about same-sex love between men and accusations of sodomy as part of religious polemic, see Karras, “Aerial Battle.”

11. *Sons of God, Daughters of Man, and the Formation of Human Society in Nahmanides's Exegesis*
Nina Caputo

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

1. Nina Caputo, *Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia: History, Community, and Messianism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007); Amos Funkenstein, "Nahmanides' Symbolic Reading of History," in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism: Proceedings of Regional Conferences Held at the University of California, Los Angeles, and McGill University in April, 1978*, ed. Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage (Cambridge, Mass.: Association of Jewish Studies, 1982), 129–50; Bernard Septimus, "'Open Rebuke and Concealed Love': Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition," in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 11–34. I extend my thanks to Ryan Szpiech for organizing the symposium from which the volume developed. Thanks are also due to Sean Hill, for helping me to situate Nahmanides's interpretations against Christian exegesis, Andrea Sterk and Michelle Campos for their very helpful comments and critiques, and, for everything, Mitchell Hart.
2. The phrase *yadon* is notoriously difficult to translate. Robert Alter, Gerhard von Rad, and the JPS Bible all render it as "abide," while noting that it is a speculative translation. Robert Alter, ed. and trans., *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2004), 38; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 108. I have chosen "exist," following Gilboa and Peterson (who opt for "remain"), because it most closely coheres with the way Nahmanides understood the text. R. Gilboa, "Who 'Fell Down' to Our Earth?: A Different Light on Genesis 6:1–4," *Biblische Notizen* 111 (2002): 66–75 at 47; David L. Petersen, "Genesis 6:1–4: Yahweh and the Organization of the Cosmos," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13 (1979): 47–64 at 69.
3. The recent scholarship on this chapter is sizable and much of it classifies Genesis 6:1–4 as "primordial history" or "myth." Many resort to an interpretation based on authorial intent: the *benei ha-elohim* and *nefilim* must have been so familiar at the time of redaction that the author(s) did not feel it necessary to introduce or explain them. Though the demigods were ultimately displaced by Yahweh and his human creatures, this passage, a vestige of a suppressed traditions, was too familiar to leave out. However, this mode of interpretation forces a devaluation of the content of Genesis 6 in particular, and Genesis 1–11 more generally, in theological or practical terms, as biblical myth stands outside the realm of *halakhah* or *torah*. Since the terms *benei ha-elohim* and *nefilim* appear rarely in the biblical corpus, the conventions of text criticism lead scholars to view these characters as holdovers from a theologically primitive faith that allowed for demigods and demons to populate the earth. A more recent strain of this approach views the *benei ha-elohim*, *nefilim*, and *gibborim* as gods and heroes in the Hellenic mode. The following includes a small selection of literature on these questions: David J.A. Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Genesis 6:1–4) in the Context of the 'Primeval History (Genesis 1–11),' " *Journal for the*

- Study of the Old Testament* 13 (1979): 33–46; Lyle Eslinger, “A Contextual Identification of the Bene Ha’Elohim and Benoth Ha’Adam in Genesis 6:1–4,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 13 (1979): 65–73; Sven Fockner, “Reopening the Discussion: Another Contextual Look at the Sons of God,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 4 (2008): 435–56; Gilboa, “Who ‘Fell Down’ to Our Earth?”; Ronald S. Hendel, “Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 1 (1987): 13–26; Petersen, “Genesis 6:1–4”; Andreas Schüle, “The Divine-Human Marriages (Genesis 6:1–4) and the Greek Framing of the Primeval History,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 65, no. 2 (2009): 116–28; Emmanuel Usue, “Theological-Mythological Viewpoints on Divine Sonship in Genesis 6 and Psalm 2,” in *Psalms and Mythology*, ed. Dirk J. Human (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 75–90.
4. This translation is based on an intertextual reading based on the reference to *nefilim* as a race of giants in Numbers, 13:32–33. On translations of *nefilim* and *gibborim*, see Jan Alberto Soggin, “Sons of God(s), Heroes, and ‘Nephilim’: Remarks on Genesis 6:1–4,” in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, ed. Michael V. Fox, Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, Avi Hurvitz, Michael L. Klein, Baruch J. Schwartz, and Nili Shapuk (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 135–36.
 5. Philip S. Alexander, “The Targumim and Early Exegesis of ‘Sons of God’ in Genesis 6,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 (1972): 60–62.
 6. Archie T. Wright, *The Origins of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6:1–4 in Early Jewish Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Alexander, “The Targumim.”
 7. Wright, *The Origins of Evil Spirits*, 6. Wright goes on to show that the interpretation of *gibborim* as giants was based on Nimrod, who is named in the Septuagint as a giant who played a role in building the Tower of Babel. He concludes that the Septuagint translation of *gibborim* provided the creative and perhaps mythological impetus for the elaborate Watcher tradition. On Nimrod and the *nefilim*, also see Loren Stuckenbruck, “The ‘Angels’ and ‘Giants’ of Genesis 6:1–4 in Second and Third Century BCE Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7, no. 3 (2000): 354–77 at 355–58.
 8. *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text: (based on A. Sperber’s Edition)*, ed. Moses Aberbach and Bernard Grossfeld (New York: Ktav Pub. House; Denver: Center for Judaic Studies, University of Denver, 1982), 52–53.
 9. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 26, 5 in *The Midrash Rabbah*, ed. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon, trans. H. Freedman et al., 10 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 1:213.
 10. Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Reading Augustine and/as Midrash: Genesis 6 in Genesis Rabbah and the City of God,” in *Midrash and Context: Proceedings of the 2004 and 2005 SBL Consultation on Midrash*, ed. Liere M. Teugels and Rivka Ulmer (Picataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2007), 61–110.
 11. Steven Daniel Sacks, *Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture*, Studia Judaica Bd. 48 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009). Also Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism v. 140 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
 12. Moses ben Nahman, *Perushei ha-Torah le-rabbenu Moshe ben Nahman (Ramban)*, ed. Chaim Dov Chavel, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1959), 1:49.

13. Caputo, *Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia*, 51–89; Y. Elman, “‘It Was No Empty Thing’: Nahmanides and the Search for Omnisignificance,” *The Torah U-Madda Journal* 4 (1993): 1–83; Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 105–28; Elliot R. Wolfson, “Beautiful Maiden without Eyes: Peshat and Sod in Zoharic Hermeneutics,” in *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, ed. M. Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 155–203; Moshe Halbertal, “Mavet, ḥeṭʿ, ḥoq u-geʿulah be-mishnat ha-Ramban.” *Tarbiz* 71, no. 1–2 (2001–2): 133–62.
14. Genesis says five hundred. Nahmanides’s evidently counted the years based on the details provided in the narrative.
15. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei*, 1:48.
16. In contrast, Rashi turns to rabbinic exegetical principal: “there is no before or after in Torah” (*ein muqdam u-mukhar ba-torah*). See Rashi on Genesis 6:3.
17. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei*, 1:48.
18. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 26, 5. Also see Rashi on Genesis 6:2: “in every [instance] that ‘elohim’ [appears] in the Bible it means authority.”
19. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei*, 1:49.
20. “As for Seth, to him, a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. It was then that the name of the Lord was first invoked” Genesis 4:26. I will return to this passage and its interpretation as the first instance of idolatry below.
21. *Bereshit Rabbah* 2, 3 already links the generation of Enosh to sin and malevolence at the very start of creation: “and darkness (Gen. 1:2) refers to the generation of Enosh.” Also see *Bereshit Rabbah* 5, 1; 19, 7; 23, 6: (“[the verse says] Adam, Seth, and Enosh, and then it is silent.’ He replied, ‘until this point, they were created in the likeness and image [of God], but from then the generations fell to ruin and Centaurs were created.’”); also see 26, 4 (which comments on Genesis 6:4). Rashi repeats this interpretation in his commentary on Genesis 6:4, 6:17, and 18:5.
22. Steven D. Fraade, “Enosh and His Generation Revisited,” in *Biblical Figures outside the Bible*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press, 1998), 59–86.
23. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei*, 1:48. In addition, Ibn Ezra offers two slightly different interpretations: the first suggests that man would be diminished through sexual activity and the second argues that violence—especially sexual violence—as the cause of physical degeneration. “*Benei ha-elohim* are sons of judges who *knew the knowledge of the most high* (Num. 24:16); the sense of *sons* is that their lust was greater than that of their fathers; the meaning of ‘*that they were good*’ is that they wanted proof that each of the women they chose was to their measure astrologically and physically. *And they took for themselves*—by decree and by force.” Abraham ibn Ezra, *Perush Bereshit*, “*Shitah Aheret*,” in Menahem Cohen, *Miqraʾot gedolot ha-Keter* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1997), 74.
24. Most interpret *toivot* as beautiful rather than good. For a compelling argument for reading *toivot* as good, see Carol M. Kaminski, “Beautiful Women or ‘False Judgment’?: Interpreting Genesis 6:2 in the Context of Primaeval History,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, no. 4 (2008): 457–73.
25. Moses ben Naḥman, *Perushei*, 1:48. The violence here refers to the injunction not to visit violence upon Cain in Genesis 4:15.

26. Moses ben Nahman, *Perushei*, 1:49.
27. Moses ben Nahman, *Perushei*, 1:49–50.
28. For a discussion of Genesis 1–11 as a narrative of the development of human society in relation to God and human nature more broadly, see Robert Kawashima, “Homo Faber in J’s Primeval History,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116, no. 4 (2004): 483–501.
29. Moses ben Nahman, *Perushei*, 1:50.
30. *Pirquei de Rabbi Eli’ezer*, *Perek* 22. I used the version of this text that is reproduced in the online Responsa Project from Bar Ilan University.
31. Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 23 in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini de civitate Dei*, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alphons Kalb, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955).
32. Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 23, in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini de civitate Dei*.
33. He calls for the elimination of apocryphal works from the Christian library because their origins and authority are subject to question. In particular, he condemns the Book of Enoch for its popularization of fantastic tales of giants. Augustine, *City of God*, XV, 23.
34. Reed, “Reading Augustine and/ as Midrash,” 91–103. Reed’s argument that Augustine and the rabbis of the Midrash used very similar exegetical methods rests on a comparative analysis of their respective conceptions of how meaning is conveyed in the Bible. She demonstrates that both viewed scripture as speaking with a singular voice and that for both, intertextual exegesis facilitated a full dismissal of the apocryphal works as generally untrustworthy and dangerous.
35. L. R. Wickham, “The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Gen 6:2 in Early Christian Exegesis,” in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 19, ed. James Barr, 135–47 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 138–40.
36. As noted above, the interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 among Christians as an account of fallen angels played an important role in early Christian cosmogony. Irenaeus, in the second century, detailed the “teachings of wickedness” brought to the daughters of man by these angels: Irenaeus of Lyon, “The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,” trans. Armitage Robinson, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, 1920, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.pdf>. (accessed 4 Sept., 2012), ¶18, 85–86. Similarly, Tertullian attributes the invention of astrology and magic to fallen angels: Tertullian: *Latin Christianity, Its Founder, Tertullian*, ed. James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Alexander Roberts (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957).
37. In the interest of space I will limit focus exclusively on Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Thomas Gilby et al. 61 vols. London: Blackfriars, 1964–81, I, QQ. 50–64. For a discussion of other scholastic engagements with the problem of angelic carnality, see John Danielou and David Heimann, *The Angels and Their Mission: According to the Fathers of the Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1983); Franklin T. Harkins, “The Embodiment of Angels: A Debate in Mid-Thirteenth-Century Theology,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 78, no. 1 (2011): 25–58; David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13–27, 75–113. Also, on the impact and legacy of Peter Lombard’s *Sententiarum*, see Philipp W. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard’s Sentences* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2007), 23–91. Both threads

of interpretation exist simultaneously in the *Glossa Ordinaria*. See *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament I, Genesis 1–11* ed. Andrew Louth (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001), 124; and more generally on the redaction of this work, see Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria the Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).

38. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Q. 51, art. 3.
39. Harkins, “The Embodiment of Angels,” 47–49.
40. This was a fairly well established interpretation of this portion of Talmud: “Destructive angels who fell to earth during the time of Na’amah, Tuval-Cain’s sister. About them it has been said ‘and *benei ha-elohim* saw the daughters of man’ (Gen. 6:2), as it says ‘for their nakedness they sought atonement.’” Rashi on BT Yoma 67b. On the early history of this tradition, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, “From Asael and Semihazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azael: 3 Enoch 5 (par. 7–8) and Jewish Reception-history of 1 Enoch,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2001): 105–36. The *Zohar* develops the tradition of Uzza and Azael as the *nefilim* in 1:9b, 1:37a, 1:55a, and 1:58a.

12. *Late Medieval Readings of the Strange Woman in Proverbs* *Esperanza Alfonso*

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1. Proverbs 6:20–35 refers to: a wicked woman (*eshet raʿ*), an alien woman (*nokhriyyah*), a harlot (*ishshah zonah*), a married woman (*eshet ish*), and a fellow’s wife (*eshet reʿehu*), and Proverbs 23:27 to a harlot and an alien woman.
2. Modern interpretations of these biblical figures are too numerous to be quoted. For a recent survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century readings, see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 18A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 134–41 (for the strange woman), 331–41 (for Lady Wisdom); and Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 18B (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 907–14 (for the woman of strength), as well as the bibliography included therein.
3. The adjective *zarah* is also used in the expression *esh zarah*, literally “strange fire,” to describe a forbidden form of worship in Leviticus 10:1. Similarly, the expression “who disregards the covenant of her God” in reference to the strange woman in Proverbs 2:17 could be understood in reference to a marriage contract or a covenant with God.
4. I do not refer here to metaphor as a matter of language but as a matter of thought. Consensus traces this view of metaphor back to the work of I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), who set the agenda for the ensuing debate on conceptual metaphors—that is, on the role of metaphor in the creation of meaning. The mapping of a source domain onto a target domain specifically draws from George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). On the evolution of this debate since the late 1930s, see the various contributions to *Poetics Today* 12, no. 1 (1991): 145–64; 13, no. 4 (1992); 14, no. 1 (1993); 20, no. 3 (1999). This notion of metaphor lies at

- the heart of Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit's study of monotheism imagined as monogamy, and idolatry as promiscuity. See their *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). Taken metaphorically, the pertinent passages in Proverbs convey the relationship between Israel as a male and other religions as strange women. In Prophets, by contrast, the dominant metaphor is that of a female Israel going astray with other men.
5. For a brief general survey of postbiblical interpretations of both the strange woman and Lady Wisdom, see for example Alan Cooper, "The Lord Grants Wisdom: The World View of Prov. 1–9," in *Bringing the Hidden to Light: The Process of Interpretation; Studies in Honor of Stephen A. Geller*, ed. Kathryn F. Kravitz and Diane M. Sharon (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 29–44. The vacillation between the literal and the metaphorical, Cooper argues, is also found in rabbinic sources.
 6. The views held by medieval Jewish commentators on the *ishshah zarah* have generally been analyzed by modern scholars in rather tangential ways, as footnotes to the history of the interpretation of Proverbs. Specific studies devoted to medieval readings of this biblical figure remain, thus, in the minority. Recently, the strange woman has also received attention in the framework of studies on the attitude of medieval Jewish scholars toward women. See, for example, Abraham Grossman, *Ve-hu' yimshol bakh?: Ha-ishshah be-mishnatam shel hakhmei yisra'el bi-yemei ha-beinayyim* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2011), as well as some of his other studies narrower in scope ("Ha-ishshah be-mishnato shel R. Menaḥem ha-Me'iri," *Zion* 67, no. 3 [2003]: 253–91), and Julia Schwartzmann's piece on "Gender Concepts of Medieval Jewish Thinkers and the Book of Proverbs," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7 (2000): 183–202. In these works, as in a few others, it is the attitude held toward women that becomes the specific focus of the enquiry.
 7. "We should avoid the songs of the uncircumcised, which are nothing but lechery and obscenity; their entire purpose is to lead women astray. It would be absolutely amazing for a woman grown accustomed to these lecherous words from the times she was small not to sin. Can a man conceal fire in his breast without burning his clothes? (Prov. 6:27). If we condemn those who linger over the wine, how much more should we condemn those who sing these lecherous songs! Woe to the foolish father and the seducing mother who raise their daughters in this way, leading them in the path of harlotry (cf. Lev. 19:29). There is no doubt that this is a terrible custom, which has come to us from the practices of the Gentiles in whose midst we live." Jacob Anatoli, "Mamad ha-talmidim," British Library, MS Add. 26898, fol. 126b, as translated into English and quoted by Marc Saperstein in "Christians and Christianity in the Sermons of Jacob Anatoli," *Jewish History* 6 (1992): 225–46; reprint in Marc Saperstein, *Your Voice Like a Ram's Horn: Themes and Texts in Traditional Jewish Preaching* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1996), 55–74 at 71.
 8. This gender shift is hardly accidental, as communities often imagine threats to their boundaries by means of acts of sexual aggression against women. If only as a token, see "Conversion, Sex and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 4 (2002): 1065–93, where David Nirenberg explores how anxiety over the integrity of sexual boundaries is conveyed in medieval Iberian Christian sources.

9. Proverbs 6:24 refers to a wicked and an alien woman and Proverbs 6:26 to a harlot. Allusion to harlotry is strengthened by an intertextual reference to Leviticus 19:29 where, among a list of commands for every area of life, God admonishes Moses “not to degrade your daughter and make a harlot; lest the law fall into harlotry and the land be filled with depravity.”
10. “No proof may be brought from [the philosopher’s] words . . . and this is what the sage [Solomon] meant when he said, ‘all who go to her cannot return’ (Prov. 2:19). In other words, anyone who takes up philosophy will never be able to instill the Law in his heart. . . . For this reason, he will never be firmly grounded in the Wisdom of the Law, ‘and find again the paths of life’ (Prov. 2:19). . . . And should it occur to him to equate the two wisdoms, and to draw arguments from one or the other, in this way he will corrupt judgment. For they are two opposites, antagonistic to one another; they cannot abide together.” Asher ben Yehiel [Ha-Rosh], *She’elot u-teshuvot*, 55.9 (cited from Bar-Ilan’s Judaic Library on CD Rom, Version 11 [2003]), as translated into English and quoted in Cooper, “The Lord Grants Wisdom,” 36.
11. Yitzhak F. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman with an introduction by Benjamin R. Gampel, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992), 1:318. See also Eleazar Gutwirth, “Asher b. Yehiel e Israel Israeli,” in *Creencias y culturas: Cristianos, judíos y musulmanes en la España Medieval*, ed. Carlos Carrete Parrondo (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia and Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1998), 88–99.
12. Very little is known about Joseph ben Joseph ibn Naḥmias, and most of it derives from Moshe Aryeh ha-Levi Bamberger’s introductions to his editions of Ibn Naḥmias’s commentaries. While he is thought to have commented on most of the Bible, only his commentaries on Esther, Proverbs, and Jeremiah are extant, as well as commentaries to tractates *Avot* and *Nedarim* (the latter still in manuscript), as well as to the *piyyuṭ* (‘synagogal poem’) *Attah konanta* (“You Established”). He is also known to have translated part of Maimonides’s *Guide of the Perplexed*. See Israel M. Ta-Shma, “Naḥmias, Joseph ben Joseph,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 14:754.
13. Thus far I have referred to a general opposition between the literal—reading the text as the portrayal of a real woman—and the metaphorical—where she would stand as a symbol for an alien culture or the worship of other gods (see above, note 4). In the time period covered in this paper, the most common systematization of the different levels of reading was a fourfold division typically described with the acronym PaRDeS (Heb. ‘orchard’), and are divided into: (1) *peshaṭ*, the most immediate meaning as derived from the context; (2) *remez* (often described as *mashal*, or philosophical allegory); (3) *derash* (also described as *midrash*), interpretative mood that explains the text, intertextually, by relation to other biblical texts; (4) *sod*, or mystical allegory. When superimposing one set of categories (literal versus metaphorical) on the other (*peshaṭ*, *derash*, *remez*, and *sod*), it is clear that literal equates *peshaṭ*, and that metaphorical equates *remez* and *sod*. In *midrash*, both literal and metaphorical readings coalesce (the rabbis read the strange woman as a prostitute, or as heresy, for example).
14. While *derash/midrash* includes both literal and metaphorical readings, when invoking this exegetical mood, Ibn Naḥmias often refers to the latter—that is, to the identi-

fication of the strange woman with heresy. He connects both exegetical moods in more than one way. In Proverbs 2:16–19 he follows the *peshat* with a note on the *midrash* in Proverbs 2:19; in Proverbs 5:1–23 he privileges the *midrash* (idolatry as a token of those things that seem to be smoother than oil, but in the end are bitter as wormwood [Prov. 5:4]), but interprets Proverbs 5:15–20 according to both *peshat* and *midrash*. In Chapter 6 the boundaries between the two are even more blurred; he reads Chapter 7 according to the *peshat*. As for the connection between the two, he adduces rabbinic quotations as part of his *peshat* reading (see for example his comments on Proverbs 2:17), and inserts grammatical comments in his interpretation of the text according to *midrash* (see, for example, his comments on Proverbs 5:5).

15. For his commentary, see Ibn Naḥmias, *Perush 'al Sefer Mishlei le-Rabbi Yosef b. Rabbi Yosef b. Naḥmi'as*, ed. Moshe Aryeh ha-Levi Bamberger (Berlin: Meqize Nirdamim, 1911).
16. Shortly before Ibn Naḥmias's lifetime, the community leader R. Todros Halevi Abulafia, in a famous sermon delivered in 1281, had compared sexual relations with non-Jewish women to idol worship. See Yom Tov Assis, "Sexual Behaviour in Medieval Hispano-Jewish Society," in *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein (London: P. Halban, 1988), 25–59.
17. See above, note 13.
18. For Rashi's commentaries, see Menaḥem Cohen, ed., *Miqra'ot gedolot ha-Keter* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1997–), electronic version.
19. Maimonides's understanding of the strange woman of Proverbs, whom he treats only tangentially, is in line with his overall approach to the book of Proverbs in particular, and with the biblical text in a more general sense. In his introduction to the first part of the *Guide* (Moses ben Maimon, *Moreh ha-nevukhim / Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn: Maqor we-targum*, ed. and trans. into Hebrew by Joseph Kafih [Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1972], 1:12; trans. in *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines, with an introductory essay by Leo Strauss [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 1:13, hereinafter Maimonides, *Guide*) Maimonides writes that he will explain the meaning of certain equivocal, derivate, and amphibolous terms in the Bible, as well as very obscure *amthāl/meshalim* ('parables' in Pines's translation) occurring in the books of the prophets that have both an external sense and an internal one. Among them, Maimonides argues, there were those in which each term conveyed meaning, and those in which the text as a whole conveyed meaning. The passage on the *eshet ish zonah* (married harlot) in Proverbs 7:6–21 is the example he adduces for the second type. Solomon likens this harlot, who is a married woman, to matter, the cause of all bodily pleasures, an allegory that runs through the whole book of Proverbs. In contrast to his warning against the married harlot, Solomon ends with a eulogy of the *eshet hayil*, her antitype, who in Maimonides's words is "a woman who is not a harlot but confines herself to attending to the welfare of her household and husband." In Part 3 of the *Guide* he compares the nature of human matter, which is never found without form, to that of a married harlot, who has a husband but never ceases to seek out other men. The married harlot stands for human matter, which is never free and is subject to corruption, while the woman of virtue stands for that special kind of human matter that is excellent and suitable to the intellect and is hence easy to control (*Guide*, 2:367 ed.; 2:431 trans.).

20. Here I refer to the text in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vatican Ebr. 89 (attributed to David Qimḥi in Cohen, ed., *Miqra'ot gedolot* and in Frank Talmage, *Perushim le-Sefer Mishlei le-veit Qimḥi* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990). This attribution, however, is not universally accepted. See for example Naomi Grunhaus, “The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimḥi on Proverbs: A Case of Mistaken Attribution,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 54, no. 2 (2003): 311–27. The author of the extant text in this commentary explains that while Proverbs has been understood according to the oppositions of Torah/idolatry and matter/intellect, he will explain it according to its *peshat*. See Talmage, *Perushim* 328–9.
21. See Ibn Naḥmias on Proverbs 5:19, 6:26, 6:30, 7:19 and 7:20. The commentary traditionally attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra and included in standard editions of *Miqra'ot gedolot* is actually by Moses Qimḥi.
22. This is only what has come to us and is available in printed editions after a very complex textual manuscript transmission.
23. Although Gersonides's works have been extensively studied, little is known about his life. For a bibliographical survey, see Menahem Kellner, “Bibliographia Gersonidiana: An Annotated List of the Writings by and about R. Levi ben Gershom,” in *Studies on Gersonides: A Fourteenth-Century Philosopher-Scientist*, ed. Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 367–416.
24. He describes this inner meaning as *mashal*. For Gersonides's commentary, see *Miqra'ot gedolot*. For previous literature on his gender views, see Grossman, *Ve-hu' yimshol bakh?*, 439–60, and more specifically Schwartzmann, “Gender Concepts,” 197.
25. Gersonides sees moral perfection as a necessary prerequisite for intellectual perfection. However, morals and ethics are subordinated to philosophy and man only attains perfection in philosophy. See Charles Touati, “‘Theoria’ et ‘Praxis’ dans l'éthique de Gersonide,” in *Gersonide en son temps: Science et philosophie médiévales*, ed. Gilbert Dahan (Paris: Peeters, 1991), 151–8; and Baruch Braner, “Petiḥat ha-Ralbag le-ve'ur Sefer Mishlei ve-gilgulei nosaḥ ha-ḥibbur,” *Tarbiz* 73 (2004): 271–92. As for how this hermeneutics translates into his works, the following remark by Feldman is worth quoting in full: “For Gersonides, Ecclesiastes is a preparatory essay in which the Young Solomon collects opinions about the goals and values of life; Proverbs is an epistemological essay in which he proposes precise definitions for key concepts, such as wisdom and *tevunah*, and Song of Songs is an epistemological essay concerned entirely with the nature of human development,” (Seymour Feldman, “The Wisdom of Solomon: A Gersonidean Interpretation,” in *Gersonide en son temps: Science et philosophie médiévales*, ed. Gilbert Dahan [Louvain: Peeters, 1991], 61–80, at 75). See his comments on 7:23 where he explicitly notes the agreement between both dimensions.
26. See David S. Sassoon, *Ohel David: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library, London*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1:81.
27. Sotheby's, *A Further Ninety-Seven Highly Important Hebrew Manuscripts from the Collection Formed by the Late David Solomon Sassoon* (New York: Sotheby's, 1984), no. 8.
28. Reference to the *niddah* had appeared in the commentary written by the moralist Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi (c. 1200–1263). See *Sefer Mishlei: Mahadurah menuqqedet 'im perushei Rashi, rabbenu Yonah Gerondi, Mezudat David, Mezudat Ziyyon*, ed. Ya'aqov Gloskinos (Jerusalem: Feldhem, 1998), ad 6:24. In this passage, he established

a difference between *niddah*, and the wife of either a *havver* (friend) or a *nokhri* (foreigner). For the parallel between the vilification of Jewish menstruants and the negative characterization of Christians, see Sharon Faye Koren, “The Menstruant as ‘Other’ in Medieval Judaism and Christianity,” *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies and Gender Issues* 17 (2009): 33–59.

29. This association is made explicit in classical kabbalistic sources. See, if only as a token, *Sefer ha-Zohar*, II, 125b–126a (available online at Bar Ilan Online Responsa Project <<http://www.responsa.co.il/home.en-US.aspx>> [last accessed October 14, 2012]). In this passage, the wife who stays at home is linked to the *Shekhinah* who is called *bayit* (‘house’). The woman who goes out into the streets is liable to be seduced and be unfaithful to her husband, who represents *yesod* (‘foundation’), one of the ten *sefirot*.
30. See, for example *Zohar*, II, 1:116b.
31. See MS Sassoon no. 559, *ad* 2:17.
32. See MS Sassoon no. 559, *ad* 23:30. Association between idolatry and Christianity is strengthened in other passages by the association between *se‘irim* (‘demons’) and Esau, to whom Mount Se‘ir was given. See MS Sassoon no. 559, *ad* 5:9.
33. See MS Sassoon no. 559, *ad* 5:20–1.
34. See Sara O. Heller-Wilensky, R. *Yizḥaq ‘Ara’mah u-mishnato* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1956), 1–50. As for his commentary on Proverbs, see *Sefer Mishlei ‘im perush Yad Avshalom*, ed. I. Freimann (Leipzig, 1858–59; reprint, Jerusalem, 1968).
35. For a study of this theory, see Julia Schwartzmann, “Isaac Arama and His Theory of the Two Matches (Zivvugim),” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (2006): 27–49 at 34. In this essay, Schwartzmann argues that this is an attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction between two rabbinic sayings: “forty days before the child is conceived a match is made in heaven” and “a man is matched with a woman according to his deeds” (Sotah 2a). See also Grossman, *Ve-hu’ yimshol bakh?*, 480.
36. Arama uses the terms *nigleh* and *nistar* to refer to superficial and deeper meaning respectively. It is clear that he does not oppose a metaphorical interpretation of the text—that is, an interpretation of the text according to its *nistar*; he rather opposes the automatic identification of the metaphor’s target domain with a postulate of Aristotelian philosophy.
37. In his introduction, Arama established three types of biblical discourse: *melizah* (texts where the meaning is none other than the apparent one); *shir* (where the meaning is just the allegorical one) and *mashal* (where there is an apparent and a deeper meaning). These three discourses are exemplified by Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs respectively.
38. Arama, well aware of his innovation, states that it is motivated by a desire to explain large units in the text and not isolated verses, like his predecessors, and by a need to explain the existence of repetitions of words and sections in Proverbs up to three or four times. As for the remaining passages in reference to Lady Wisdom: Prov. 1:20–33 (he explains this passage as referring to the four different kinds of human beings he has talked about in the introduction); Prov. 8:1–36; 9:1–6 (he reads Chapters 8 and 9 as a controversy between philosophy and Torah); 9:13–18 (in reference to Lady Folly).
39. See Harry A. Wolfson, “The Classification of Sciences in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 2 (1925): 263–315; reprint in Harry A. Wolfson,

- Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religions*, ed. I. Twersky and G. Williams, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973–77), 1:493–560 at 507–8 and 514.
40. See Eleazar Gutwirth, “Gender, History, and the Judeo-Christian Polemic,” in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 257–78 at 257–9.
 41. See Avraham Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious: Jewish Women in Medieval Europe* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 135. For prostitution in Iberia, see Assis, “Sexual Behaviour.”
 42. By philosophers, Arama refers to radical Aristotelians among his fellow Jewish contemporaries. In *R. Yizḥaq ‘Ara’mah u-mishnato* (17), Heller-Wilensky points out Arama’s twofold division of this camp: those who have completely abandoned Judaism and who have lost faith in the historical choice of Israel, and those who seek a conciliation between Torah and philosophy.
 43. In a passage from *Hazut Qashah* (Grievous Vision), a short treatise dealing with the relationship between philosophy and religion, Arama shows preference for Gentiles over (Jewish) philosophers when stating: “In truth, the men of Edom and Ishmael are more consistent than the traitorous sons of Judah, for they, though they were the last to receive their religion, have chosen the path of faith and sacrificed not a single iota to the claims of philosophy, particularly the Christians, who have made use of their writings and arguments to set philosophy at naught, albeit they had among them excellent and superb philosophers; whereas our philosophers . . . were raised in its [faith’s] lap [. . .] and had no share in analytic philosophy [. . .] until they turned about and developed a love for it [for philosophy]” (as quoted in Baer, *A History of the Jews*, 2:256–57). In the following passage he equates Jewish philosophers, Christians, and *anusim* (*conversos*). “And these men [the Jewish intellectuals] followed them [the Christians] in thinking, as did the others who departed [i.e., *anusim*], that the Torah had lost its taste and fragrance and ceased to yield its strength.” See Baer, *A History of the Jews*, 2:258.
 44. See Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 392; and Heller-Wilensky, *R. Yizḥaq ‘Ara’mah u-mishnato*, 27.
13. *Exegesis as Autobiography: The Case of Guillaume de Bourges*
Steven F. Kruger
1. Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. James J. O’Donnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8.12.29. In Augustine, the relation between autobiography and exegesis extends far beyond this particular narrative moment. See the discussion in Theresa Tinkle, *Gender and Power in Medieval Exegesis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 8–9, 49–74.
 2. Hermannus quondam Judaeus, *Opusculum de conversione sua*, ed. Gerlinde Niemeyer, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1963). On Hermann, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Conversion of Herman the Jew: Autobiography, History, and Fiction in the Twelfth Century*, trans. Alex J. Novikoff (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010 [2003]). For a reading of the interpretive-exegetical strategies of the autobiography, see Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 150–65.

3. Guibert of Nogent, *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, trans. Paul J. Archambault (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 60.
4. Guibert, *Monk's Confession*, 62–63.
5. Jay Rubenstein, *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 39.
6. Guillaume de Bourges, *Livre des guerres du seigneur et deux homélies: Introduction, texte critique, translation et notes*, ed. and trans. Gilbert Dahan, Sources Chrésiennes 288 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1981). Dahan's introduction and notes represent the fullest critical and historical treatment of Guillaume de Bourges to date. In what follows, I quote from Dahan's Latin text, but I have also consulted the manuscript. English translations are my own. When Guillaume's biblical citations correspond to the Vulgate, I quote the Douay-Rheims translation; when these diverge from the Vulgate, I adapt the Douay-Rheims accordingly.
7. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 1–36ra; Guillaume, *Livre*, 66–273.
8. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 36ra–38va; Guillaume, *Livre*, 274–89.
9. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 38va–44ra; Guillaume, *Livre*, 290–319.
10. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 44ra–47rb. On the possible attribution of the text, see Guillaume, *Livre*, 19–22.
11. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 47rb–48ra.
12. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 48ra–48vb.
13. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 48vb–50rb.
14. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 50va–79rb. For the published text, see Isidore of Seville, *De fide catholica contra Iudeos*, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1844–55), 83:449–538.
15. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 79va–100vb. For the published text, see Bertram von Ahlen, *De via contemplationis et cognitionis Dei*, in *Texte aus der Zeit Meister Eckharts, I: Bertram von Ahlen, Opera*, ed. Alessandra Beccarisi, *Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi VII, 1, Miscellanea* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2004), 1–49. Dahan also summarizes the contents of MS lat. 18211 (Guillaume, *Livre*, 61–63).
16. Guillaume, *Livre*, 66. “Guillelmus Christi diaconus, olim iudeus”; “Per ammonicionem beati et eximii confessoris Guillelmi bituricensis achiiepiscopi, nuper veniens de umbra veritatis ad lucem que, videlicet per fidem evangelicam, illuminat omnem mundum.”
17. As Dahan notes, the title refers to Numbers 21:14, and Dahan considers whether the work might respond to prior polemical works with the same allusive title, notably Jacob ben Reuben's, concluding: “it seems to us, then, that we must exclude the hypothesis of a ‘response’ by Guillaume de Bourges to this treatise” (Guillaume, *Livre*, 38; my translation; see also 23–24, 37).
18. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211 fol. 1; Guillaume, *Livre*, 66. “Omnibus in Christo credentibus.”
19. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 1–2vb; Guillaume, *Livre*, 66–75.

20. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 2vb–3rb; Guillaume, *Livre*, 76–79.
21. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 3rb–30va; Guillaume, *Livre*, 80–241.
22. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 30va–32va; Guillaume, *Livre*, 242–53.
23. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 32va–34va; Guillaume, *Livre*, 254–63.
24. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18211, fols. 34va–36ra; Guillaume, *Livre*, 264–72.
25. Guillaume, *Livre*, 66. “Instigantibus, sicut credo, quibusdam fidelibus qui me in noticia lingue hebrayce credunt aliquantulum profecisse, compulsus sum de fide nostra catholica, secundum quod hebraica veritas attestatur, disputacionis librum componere contra perfidiam Iudeorum, ut de ipsa veritate quam tenent in littere obscuritate, carnaliter, non veraciter et spiritualiter, intellectu vel opere iuxta ipsius littere testimonium confundantur.”
26. Guillaume, *Livre*, 68. “Sed *insurrexerunt in me testes iniqui*.” The shift to consider these “false witnesses” against Guillaume occurs immediately after he summarizes the project of the *Liber* as participating in Christ’s own battle “for us” (*pro nobis*), and against “Jews” (*Iudeos*), “Saducean heretics” (*Saduceos hereticos*), and “God’s enemies” (*Dei inimicos*), quoting Psalms 138:21–22: “have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated thee: and pine away because of thy enemies? I have hated them with a perfect hatred: and they are become enemies to me” (*Nonne qui oderunt te, Domine, oderam, et super inimicos tuos tabescebam? Perfecto odio oderam illos, et inimici facti sunt michi*, 68). Though Guillaume does not attack his Christian detractors directly, he thus associates them, through juxtaposition but none too subtly, with Jews, heretics, and the enemies of God.
27. Guillaume, *Livre*, 68. “Quomodo, inquit, ausus es disputacionis librum componere, cum tu iudeus sis et nuper baptizatus, et inter gramaticos atque scolares minime laborasti? Tu es asinus, tu es canis.” On the association of Jews with dogs, see Kenneth Stow, *Jewish Dogs: An Image and Its Interpreters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
28. Guillaume, *Livre*, 76. “Ut igitur Iudei negare non possint prophetarum auctoritates ad Christum pertinentes, omnia capitula litteris latinis et verbis hebraicis, sicut ipsi Iudei legunt, scripsi, prout potui melius, ipsam linguam hebraicam in auctoritatibus exprimendo.” For similar statements in Ramon Martí’s anti-Jewish polemic, see Ryan Szpiech, “Translation, Transcription, and Transliteration in the Polemics of Raymond Martini, O.P.,” in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Fresco and Charles D. Wright (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 171–87. Szpiech treats in a comprehensive way Ramon’s transliteration of Hebrew texts, as well as the related strategies of translation and transcription.
29. Guillaume, *Livre*, 80. “O Iudei, qui usque in hodiernum diem negastis sanctam atque individuum Trinitatem, nonne legistis Dominum dixisse, antequam formasset Adam: *Naase adam besalmenu*, quod interpretatur: *Faciamus hominem ad ymaginem et similitudinem nostram*.” On Guillaume’s transliterations, see Dahan’s brief discussion

- (Guillaume, *Livre*, 15–16), and his more detailed study, “La leçon de Guillaume de Bourges: ses transcriptions de l’hébreu,” *Archives juives* 15 (1979): 23–33.
30. Guillaume, *Livre*, 94.
 31. Guillaume, *Livre*, 166, 168. “Et Zacharias propheta ait: *Iehaienu miomaim*, quod est: *Vivificabit nos post duos dies, et die tercia suscitabit se, vel suscitabit eum*; sic habetur in hebreo. Unde miror quam plurimum quomodo interpretes transtulerunt *suscitabit nos*, sicut Iudei assignant, necessitate compulsi, non credentes Dominum tercia die surrecturum, et non sicut scriptum habent.”
 32. As Dahan notes, “Guillaume poses here a very subtle problem of Hebrew grammar, though he does not present the proper solution. . . . [T]he Vulgate . . . is faithful to the Hebrew” (Guillaume, *Livre*, 168n1; my translation).
 33. Guillaume, *Livre*, 80. “Et dicit glosa vestra quod Deus postulaverat consilium vel auxilium ad hominem faciendum”; “ergo falsa est glosa vestra.”
 34. Guillaume, *Livre*, 136. “Cum olim legerem Ysaia prophetam et ego essem iudeus parvulus, et pervenissem ad hanc prophetiam, dicebat michi pravus magister: Noli, inquit, puer meus, hanc legere prophetiam, multos enim Iudeos avertit a lege nostra.”
 35. Guillaume, *Livre*, 66.
 36. Guillaume, *Livre*, 76. “Et quia Iudei pro triginta argenteis Christum sibi traditum per invidiam perdidit, ideo scripsi eis triginta capitula evangelica confirmata per Vetus Testamentum ut, credentes in Christum, intelligant plenius veritatem.”
 37. Guillaume, *Livre*, 108n1; my translation. Dahan does, however, recognize partial precedents for Guillaume’s discussion in Isidore of Seville, Peter of Blois, and Peter Damian. Guillaume’s treatment of the gospels seems especially indebted to Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*, one of his major sources.
 38. The fourteenth-century Iberian convert Abner of Burgos provides one striking example of this tendency; see Ryan Szpiech, “Polemical Strategy and the Rhetoric of Authority in Abner of Burgos/ Alfonso of Valladolid,” in *Late Medieval Jewish Identities: Iberia and Beyond*, ed. Carmen Caballero-Navas and Esperanza Alfonso (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 55–76.
 39. Guillaume, *Livre*, 66. “Verum, quia non credunt sanctam Trinitatem et ea que Novum asserit Testamentum, ex ipsius Veteris Testamenti auctoritatibus quibus fallaciter innituntur, meum declarando decrevi propositum confirmare.”
 40. Guillaume, *Livre*, 120, 122. “De Iohanne Baptista, precursore Domini, prophetavit Ysaia: *Col qore banydbar*, quod est: *Vox clamantis in deserto; parate viam Domini*. Et Malachias: *Ecce ego*, inquit, *mitto angelum meum qui preparabit viam ante faciem meam*. Et iterum: *Ecce, mittam ad vos Helyam prophetam, antequam veniat dies Domini, ut convertat cor patrum in filios*. Iohannes ipse est Helias, Domino nostro attestante, qui ait: *Si vultis scire, Iohannes ipse est Helias*. Et iterum: *Helias iam venit, et non cognoverunt eum*. . . . Hic est Iohannes de quo Dominus dicit: *Inter natos mulierum non surrexit maior Iohanne Baptista*. . . . Addiditque Dominus quod *Omnis lex et prophete usque ad Iohannem prophetaverunt*, ubi est intelligendum ex maxima parte, quia post prophetavit Agabus et quatuor filie Philippi.”
 41. Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica*, in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 198:1053–1844, at 1571.
 42. Guillaume, *Livre*, 142. “De illusionem et indumentis Christi prophetavit David in persona Christi. . . . *Dissipati sunt, nec compuncti, temptaverunt me*, dicentes: *Prophetiza*,

Christe, dic qui te percussit. Subsannaverunt me subsannacione, frenduerunt super me dentibus suis, dicentes: Si filius Dei es, descende de cruce.”

43. Guillaume, *Livre*, 274. “Ex toto corde ad honorem Salvatoris concorditer debemus Novum cum Veteri iungere Testamento. Non enim in vanum preceperat Dominus Moysi facere duo cherubin se invicem aspicientes, nec in Psalmis dicitur: *Abyssus abyssum invocat in voce cataractarum tuarum*. . . . Presertim, cum ille qui est auctor Novi et Veteris dicit: Oportet impleri que scripta sunt in lege Moysi et Prophetis et Psalmis de me.”
44. Guillaume, *Livre*, 274. “*Puer natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis.*”
45. For a fuller treatment of the *Homily on John*, see Steven F. Kruger, “Convert Orthodoxies: The Case of Guillaume de Bourges,” in *Jewish/Christian/Queer: Crossroads and Identities*, ed. Frederick Roden (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 47–66.
46. Guillaume, *Livre*, 300. “*Vade de littera in spiritum, de figura in veritatem, de hoc mundo ad patrem.*”
47. Guillaume, *Livre*, 316. “*In templum Dei*”; “*Porta templi . . . est beata Virgo Maria.*”
48. Guillaume, *Livre*, 68.
49. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For a more recent gendered approach to exegesis, see Tinkle, *Gender and Power*.
50. Guillaume, *Livre*, 68. “*Quibus compulsus sum respondere: Utique, karissimi, frater draconum fui et socius structionum et de asinis et canibus traxi originem. Sed ille qui cecos fecit videre et surdos audire et mutos loqui, super aquam refectionis educavit me, animam meam convertit, et, quia non cognovi literaturam, cupio intrare in potencias Domini.*”
51. Guillaume, *Livre*, 68, 70. “*Si asinus sum, sicut vos dicitis, oportet me cognoscere pre-sepe domini quod populus meus non cognovit. Si canis sum, oportet me predicare adventum Tobie, ut cecus visum recipiat. Item, si asinus sum, utique parcere mihi deberetis, dicente Domino: Si videris asinum odientis te succumbentem sub onere suo, adiuva eum. Nonne videtis Balaam impium, id est Iudeum sive Hereticum, super me, dum dicitur mihi ab eis cotidie: Ubi est Deus tuus? Potens est ergo ille, qui aperuit os asine Balaam, os meum aperire et dicere ei: Cur me cedis?, ut cadat ascensor meus retrorsum et Christus ascendat quem in ramis palmarum super pullum asine credimus ascendisse. Si canis sum, Ecclesiastes enim dicit: Melior est canis vivus leone mortuo; ut de maxilla asini mille Iudei punientur, qui dicuntur asini, expectantes cum asino ad radicem montis adhuc redemptorem; ut de cane vivo canes multi Christum circumdantes punientur.*”
52. Guillaume, *Livre*, 70, 72. “*Nimirum si fortis armatus debilem superat et infirmum; sed, si debilis et humilis superbos frangit et superat, tunc maxima apparet victoria adeo manifesta. Si David parvulus et inter fratres suos pusillus leonem et ursum non occidisset, utique non orasset: Deus qui eripuit me de manu leonis et de manu bestie, etc. Item, si David ovium pastor absque armis non percussisset gigantem fortem armatum, mulieres non decantassent: Percussit Saul mille et David decem millia. . . . Per Goliath a David interfectum intelligere debemus dyabolum a Christo occisum. Per leonem Iudeum, filium leonis rapientis et rugientis mortui; per ursum vero Hereti-*

cum, qui favum mellis, quod fortis leo de leone mortuo traxit ut Sampson, devorare desiderat.”

53. Guillaume, *Livre*, 74. “Nos vero, qui a Deo vero trino et uno baptismum suscepimus sacrum, firmiter et fideliter credamus veritati, que omnem respuens falsitatem suosque fideles in omnem veritatem inducens, vera et sine fine veritatis premia precepturos in secula seculorum. Amen.”
54. Guillaume, *Livre*, 112. “Quia futuri sunt in presepio Dominum quiescentem agnoscere, non laborabunt insimul. Mistice enim per bovem intelligimus bonum predicatorem. . . . Huic ergo non est associandus in predicacione asinus, id est ydiota et litteris imperitus, quia non solum verbo est inutilis, sed suo pravo exemplo alios corrumpit.”
55. Guillaume, *Livre*, 122, 124.
56. Guillaume, *Livre*, 126. “Sed aperte prophetavit Iacob patriarcha de Iuda traditore descendente de tribu Ysacar, dicens: *Ysacar asinus fortis*. . . . Glosa: Isacar interpretatur ‘merces,’ pro quo Iudas, qui de genere eius descendit, Dominum vendidit. Et vocatur *asinus fortis*, quia durus erat et latro, ea que mittebantur portabat ut asinus.”
57. Guillaume, *Livre*, 254. “*Popule meus, quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te, responde michi*. / Ego vindicavi innocentes tuos a Pharaone submersos pari forma. Tu vero occidisti innocentes meos in Behtleem [*sic*] et in omnibus finibus eius.”
58. Guillaume, *Livre*, 262. “Patres tui tenuerunt figuram amore veritatis, tu vero odisti veritatem dum firmasti tibi sermonem nequam, dicendo bis: *Crucifige, crucifige eum*. Ideo tibi dico bis: Revertere, revertere, penitenciam age, alioquin peribis.”
59. For recent treatment of these and related works, see Jessie Sherwood, “A Convert of 1096: Guillaume, Monk of Flaix, Converted from the Jew,” *Viator* 39 (2008): 1–22; Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Ryan Szpiech, “Scrutinizing History: Polemic and Exegesis in Pablo de Santa María’s *Siete edades del mundo*,” *Medieval Encounters* 16, no. 1 (2010): 96–142; Szpiech, “Polemical Strategy”; and Szpiech, “A Father’s Bequest: Augustinian Typology and Personal Testimony in the Conversion Narrative of Solomon Halevi/Pablo de Santa María,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Exegesis, Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts*, ed. Jonathan Decker and Arturo Prats (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 177–98.
60. Rubenstein, *Guibert*, 71.

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